A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH BAPTISTS

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with a Foreword by

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Foreword

SUBJECT, treatment, and authorship, will ensure a welcome to this book. The welcome will imply no depreciation of the contributions of other writers; still less will it render them superfluous. Any movement, or body of beliefs, or fellowship of churches, which is vital and relevant, must needs be studied from varying angles of approach and its principles expounded with varying emphases. Precise, detailed, and verbal agreement is not to be found among Baptists; and differing presentations serve to set in relief the common outlook and characteristic ethos.

Dr. Underwood holds a recognized place among the scholars and teachers of our communion. Writing as he does, with knowledge, experience, and conviction, he not only provides information but demonstrates that history is effective apologetic.

Indeed, the story of the Baptists, their influence, and their expansion, is an arresting challenge to thought. The beginnings of our continuous record are extremely modest—revealing but a handful of English "Separatists" who had found in Holland refuge from Stuart persecution at home. These prove to be the ancestors of a communion now found in over sixty countries. How has it come about that in our time the communicant membership represented in a Baptist World Congress is one-and-a-half times as numerous as that represented in a Lambeth Conference? If we confine our inquiry to the English-speaking world, how comes it that our communicant members exceed by millions those of the Anglican communion? What is the secret of this phenomenal growth? Can the influence of the Spirit of God be doubted?

By his presentation of developments in England, Dr. Underwood provides material for the answering of such questions, and in doing so prepares his readers to face others. Is the way of advance for Baptists that of retreat from their historic and distinctive

positions? Is their idea of the "gathered church" out of date? Must they revise their witness as to relations with the State? Is ecclesiastical fusion, with its inevitable authoritarian element, the necessary expression of Christian unity? Should British Baptists enter into such relations with other bodies as would shatter the unity which they enjoy with the millions of their faith and order throughout the world? These are problems which demand an understanding of our heritage; they cannot be solved by extemporized plans, or in deference to transient moods of thought and feeling, and most certainly not by yielding to the pressure for unification which invariably emerges in the exceptional conditions of wartime.

Baptists believe in the Universal Church. They rejoice to work with fellow-Christians, and—claiming liberty for themselves—respect the conscientious opinions of others; but in general they are convinced that the drive for ecclesiastical union mars the harmony of co-operation and weakens the sense of Christian unity which actually exists. Nor is it possible to overlook other perils. I recall a word spoken to me by one of the most eminent of German Protestants as in the privacy of his own home he discussed the perils arising from the recent seizure of power by the Nazis: "Our trouble in Germany is that we have never had what you in England possess, a strong Nonconformity. If we had had that, our present situation would not have arisen."

J. H. RUSHBROOKE.

London,
April 1945.

Preface

IN this book I have tried to present the story of the Baptists of England in orderly sequence, bringing out the things accomplished by them and the ideas which clothed themselves with power. To bring to life the men who were gripped by these ideas, I have not hesitated to introduce pen-portraits of prominent personalities. Few things can be more tantalizing and less informative than a mere catalogue of names and dates. Quotations from the writings of early Baptists have been given for the sake of the light they throw upon the period to which they belong. Except in the case of short quotations and the titles of published works, I have modernized the spelling of these writers. For the benefit of students, the authorities have been cited with some fulness, and a bibliography has been provided. Where it was necessary for an understanding of the story, I have sketched its political and religious background.

I have confined myself to England, mentioning the Baptist churches of Wales and Scotland only in so far as they come into the story of the English churches. The history of the Welsh Baptist churches can be recorded only by a native of the Principality, and that of the churches in Scotland has already been adequately told. There is, however, still need for a large work which will tell the story of the Baptists throughout the world, along the lines of Vedder's *A Short History of the Baptists*, but on a larger scale.

My indebtedness to Dr. W. T. Whitley is beyond computation. For more than forty years he has been, to use the phrase of an American scholar, "the mainspring of the Baptist Historical Society." I hope that he will accept my dedication of this book to him as an indication that Baptists appreciate his unselfish and untiring labours. I am also greatly indebted to Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke, President of the Baptist World Alliance, and to Mr.

Ernest A. Payne, Senior Tutor of Regent's Park College, Oxford, for reading my type-script which has benefited by their valuable suggestions. The former has also kindly written a Foreword. My thanks are due to Principal John Griffiths of the Cardiff Baptist College, Mr. Geoffrey Williams of the Evangelical Library, Pastor W. S. Baker, Secretary of the Metropolitan Association of Strict Baptist Churches, and Mr. C. T. LeQuesne, K.C., for answering my inquiries on specific points. To Miss Hargreaves I am again indebted for her invaluable help in preparing a clean type-script, reading the proofs, and preparing the index.

To Mr. C. H. Parsons, the Manager of the Baptist Union Publication Department, grateful thanks are due for all the trouble he has taken in securing the illustrations.

The views expressed in this book are my own, and are not to be taken as committing the Baptist Union or its Publication Department to them.

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Leeds.

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List of Abbreviations Used

Burrage	The Early English Dissenters, 2 volumes, Cambridge, 1912.
Crosby	History of the Baptists.
D.N.B.	Dictionary of National Biography.
E.R.E.	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
Evans	Early English Baptists.
Ivimey	History of the Baptists.
Jordan	Development of Religious Toleration in England, 4 volumes, London, 1932–1940.
Schaff-Herzog	New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, New York, 1908.
Taylor	History of the General Baptists.
Troeltsch	The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, 2 volumes, London, 1931.
Whitley, Bibliography ..	A Baptist Bibliography.
Whitley, B.L.	The Baptists of London.
Whitley, H.B.B.	A History of British Baptists.
Whitley, M.G.A... ..	Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptists.

See Bibliography at the end of this work for the dates and places of publication not given above.

CHAPTER I

Forerunners

No modern reader of some of the earlier histories of the Baptists can fail to be surprised at the extraordinary way in which their descent from the New Testament is traced through such groups as the Montanists, the Novatianists, the Paulicians, the Albigenses, the Waldensians, the Lollards and others, all of whom are claimed as Baptists. The instincts of the writers who made these excursions into genealogy were sounder than their scholarship. We cannot now agree that all the groups they so industriously enumerated were Baptists, but they did belong to the same type of Christianity, and of that type Baptists have been the spearhead. In this connexion we owe a great deal to the insights of Troeltsch who, in his monumental work, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, has shown that from the first Christianity has shaped its life and organization according to two main patterns. For the proper understanding of the history of the Baptists, it will be necessary to sketch the salient features of both types, since they have often been developed in collision with each other and Baptists belong unmistakably to one of them. Troeltsch calls one the Church-type and the other the Sect-type, but he uses the term "sect" in default of a better and without implying that the Sect-type is more sectarian in spirit than the Church-type. For the moment we may accept the terminology of Troeltsch and with his help proceed to sketch the main features of both, postponing any discussion of the question whether it is possible to discover more satisfactory designations for them.

The most prominent feature of the Church-type is the stress it

lays on the institutional character of the Church which is thought of as being in exclusive possession of the supernatural life. It thinks of the Church as the Body of Christ and as an extension of the Incarnation and, therefore, in possession of a life and tradition which carry within themselves a certain divine authority. It conveys its divine life to the individual by means of its sacramental system. Hence it emphasizes the need of infant-baptism as the sacrament of initiation which brings the child under the supernatural influence of the Church. In conformity with its sacramental character, the Church-type of Christianity usually possesses a sacerdotal ministry whose members are graded in a hierarchy. As a divine institution the Church is thought of as in possession of a holiness of its own quite apart from the personal holiness of its members. For this reason its sacraments are not rendered inefficacious by the sins of those who administer them. For the same reason, it can accept the secular order without contamination, and does not hesitate to accept State patronage and control. It endeavours to become an integral part of the social order, utilizing the State and the ruling classes and weaving these elements into its own life, seeking to dominate the masses and thus to cover the whole life of humanity. In spite of all compromise the institution remains holy and divine. Similarly, its stability remains unaffected by the extent to which its influence over individuals is actually attained. From the masses it is content with an average level of religious and moral attainment, for it regards the highest levels of the religious life as reserved for a special class who are divinely called thereto. In so far as the Church-type aims at the stabilization of the social order and makes terms with the State in return for its patronage, it becomes dependent upon the upper classes and, therefore, conservative in its tendencies. In this way the distinction between the Church and the Kingdom of God tends to be blurred; and, for that reason, all millenarian ideas are ruled out.

The Sect-type of Christianity starts from the Christian experience of the individual believer and stresses the necessity of a genuine, if rudimentary, Christian experience in all who would join a church. No man can be born into this type of Christianity.

He can enter it only by personal choice, that is, on the basis of conscious conversion. For this reason infant-baptism frequently becomes a stumbling block, when it is retained by the Sect-type, which stands for a voluntary community whose members join it of their own free-will. Thus the Sect-type organizes itself in comparatively small groups. Being convinced that organization should follow life and not precede it, it tends to disparage the idea that the Christian community as a whole must precede the individual. It organizes itself apart from the State and is indifferent to the authority of the State and the ruling classes, whom it makes no attempt to weave into the fabric of its life. At times this attitude to the State has led to the rejection of the oath and the refusal of military service. The adherents of the Sect-type are usually drawn from the lower classes and, for this reason, it has always been more radical and democratic than the Church-type. It offers them a religion which men, who are believers and are therefore under the direct rule of Christ, can manage for themselves, instead of one managed for them by the hierarchy or the upper classes. It stands for a lay Christianity, for brotherly love and religious equality. Rejecting all sacerdotal notions, it often permits the sacraments to be administered by laymen. It tends to be critical of official spiritual guides and theologians. Its followers prefer to make their own appeal direct to the New Testament.

In both range and content the asceticism of the Sect-type differs from that of the Church-type. The ascetic ideal of the former is one which is possible for all and is appointed for all, whereas that of the latter is prescribed for special classes, such as priests, monks and nuns, or for special circumstances. The Sect-type refuses to recognize a double standard of Christian living and is radical in its ethical demands, often exercising a strict discipline over all its members. It urges them all to aim at a personal, inward perfection, which is more than an average morality on good terms with the world. It calls upon its adherents to renounce the world with its pomps and pleasures. At the same time, it rejects all quasi-physical ideas of holiness, insisting that holiness is a quality not of things but only of persons, and is to be found in the common performance

of the moral demands of Christ. It, therefore, takes the Sermon on the Mount seriously and, sometimes, almost as a New Law. It feels compelled to reject the notion that the Church is in possession of an objective, concrete holiness, which it can impart to mankind through its sacraments and which is something quite apart from the personal holiness of its members. In its worship, the Sect-type tends to revolt from ordered and liturgical forms and prefers a worship which is free, spontaneous, enthusiastic and unstylized. The tones of its piety are not aesthetic and ritualistic but ethical and prophetic.

Now that sufficient has been said for the reader to recognize the two types, the question may be raised whether we can discover less question-begging names for them than those employed by Troeltsch. It has been suggested that "Group-type"[1] would serve better than "Sect-type" and also bring out the fact that the Sect-type does not aim at establishing mass churches. Unfortunately, however, the term "group" is now associated in the minds of many with the Oxford Group Movement. A better suggestion is to apply the term "voluntary" to the Sect-type and the term "institutional" to the Church-type. In the structure of the former the voluntary element is certainly stronger than the institutional. By it church-membership is made a matter of individual free-choice, and church-organization takes the form of voluntary associations. Moreover, the term "voluntary" has often been employed in Britain to indicate institutions free from State interference and control, which are supported by the voluntary gifts of their members. But the term "institutional" is not free from objection, as it may suggest to some readers a church which provides an institute with recreational facilities for its young people.

Other suggestions are "Catholic" for the Church-type and "Gathered" for the Sect-type; "comprehensive" for the former and "confessional" for the latter. No suggestion is likely to command universal approval. Probably no serious harm will be

[1] It is worth pointing out that the original title of Troeltsch's book was *Die Soziallehren der Christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen.*

done if we keep fairly closely to the terminology of Troeltsch in the following pages, and are careful to remember that he does not use the term "Sect-type" polemically, as its opponents have often done, to suggest that it possesses a larger share than the Church-type of the sectarian temper.

The adherents of the Church-type have always been more numerous than those of the Sect-type. Thus arose the tendency, which has not yet spent itself, for the Church-type to regard the Sect-type as an inferior side-issue or an unfortunate exaggeration or abbreviation of ecclesiastical Christianity, which alone has any right to exist. "There can, however, be no doubt," says Troeltsch,[1] "about the actual fact: the sects, with their greater independence of the world, and their continual emphasis upon the original ideals of Christianity, often represent in a very direct and characteristic way the essential, fundamental ideas of Christianity." "The essence of the sect does not consist merely in a one-sided emphasis upon certain vital elements of the Church-type, but is in itself a direct continuation of the idea of the Gospel." Troeltsch admits, however, that though both streams take their rise in the depths of the same mountain range, their waters are differently coloured and have a different taste.

The idea that the Sect-type of Christianity is of comparatively recent growth is, then, one which will not bear examination. Sound scholarship has made it clear that for several centuries the Christian Church fluctuated a great deal between the Church- and Sect-type. Indeed, the Church-type became dominant only after Christianity had taken up into itself, from Judaism and the heathen cults, sacerdotal notions of the Christian ministry and had compromised its independence by forging an alliance with the State. It was never able completely to suppress the Sect-type which appears in the Montanists, the Novatianists, the Donatists, the Cathari, the Paulicians, the followers of Peter of Bruys, the Waldensians, the Franciscans, Wyclif and the Lollards, and the Hussites. In all these movements may be traced, in varying degrees, an attempt to assert the spirituality of the Church, an

[1] Pp. 334 and 341.

insistence that doctrines and institutions must be judged by Scripture, and also an awakening of the spirit of free lay discussion. The Paulicians, who flourished in the Eastern Church during the eighth and following centuries, and the followers of the French priest, Peter of Bruys, who lived in the twelfth century, definitely rejected infant-baptism in favour of that of believers only. Both may properly be regarded as pre-Reformation forerunners of the Baptists.

As the Reformation on the Continent took shape, its leaders were confronted with the fateful question whether they should organize their churches according to the Church or Sect pattern. In spite of its appeal to the authority of the Bible and its emphasis upon the experimental realization of salvation in personal and inward Christian piety, the thought of Luther reveals no real tendencies towards the Sect-type. In spite of his stress that salvation is by faith alone, his ingrained conservatism led him to retain infant-baptism. His principle of a pure religion based on faith and personal conviction should have led him to the voluntary principle of church-membership. After the Peasants' War, however, his distrust of the common man drove him into the arms of the German Princes and with their help he created a thoroughly Erastian, territorial church system, which placed the power to suppress heresy and schism in the hands of the secular authorities.

In Geneva, Calvin established a different form of church-organization and government, but he also definitely inclined to the Church-type. Instead of the Erastianism of Luther, we find in Geneva a theocratic union between the Church and the State, the committal to the State of the task of enforcing purity of doctrine and suppressing all sectaries, together with a definite attempt to bring the whole life of the community under Church control. Genevan Calvinism was not, however, entirely uninfluenced by the Sect-type of Christianity. Calvin adopted its ideal of the holy community and also its methods of realizing this ideal by excommunication and church discipline. There was, however, this difference: Calvin applied this ideal to a whole territorial or national church, instead of to small groups of genuine Christians

within "gathered" churches. This produced a tension which was later to shatter the solidarity of Calvinism. The influence of the Church-type on the Calvinism of Geneva appears also in its insistence on the Church as the sole organ which mediates salvation in its definite emphasis on the Sacraments as objective means of divine grace, in its retention of infant-baptism, and in its contention that the secular power should be the executor of religious policy, assisting the Church to rule and discipline the ungodly in the interests of the elect. True, the Church consisted of the elect, but its government was really in the hands of its ministers, who held their office in accordance with what was believed to be the church-order divinely revealed in the New Testament. The idea of a Royal Head of the Church is missing, as also is that of patronage.

Lutheranism and Calvinism do not, however, represent the whole of Continental Protestantism. During this time of religious upheaval the Sect-type of Christianity sprang into vigorous life. Groups were formed which saw in the victories the Reformers were winning an opportunity of developing a free, anti-hierarchical, and entirely lay religious movement. On every hand there sprang into existence small groups of earnest Christians, living apart from "the world" and claiming complete religious freedom. These were the Anabaptists who promoted what has been called "the common man's Reformation."

The fundamental principle which governed the Anabaptist Movement was that of the immediate and direct accountability to God of each individual. Between God and the individual soul they recognized no mediator save Jesus Christ. This principle determined all their views, religious, social, and political. It led them to insist upon the right of the individual to interpret Scripture for himself. The supreme qualification for the interpretation of Scripture was spiritual illumination. Some of them asserted the superiority of the New Testament to the Old. "I obey," said one of them, "that in the Old Testament which I find confirmed in the New." On all essential matters of doctrine they were orthodox. though a few fell into errors about the Person of

Christ. They were, however, opposed to the Augustinian theology, which had so powerfully influenced Luther and Calvin. They insisted strongly on the freedom of the human will, for it seemed to them that Augustinian doctrines of unconditional election and irresistible grace were damaging to the interests of practical piety. In this respect they anticipated by nearly a century the Arminian reaction against Calvinism. On eschatological questions there were great differences of opinion among them. The majority held sane and biblical views but a few expected an early return of Christ. Under the strain of bitter persecution, this millenarianism was fanned in some cases into a glowing fanaticism. It led at Münster, as we shall see, to an attempt to set up the kingdom of Christ by destroying the wicked.

Opposed to the notion of a territorial or State Church composed of all baptized in infancy and now living in a certain district, the Anabaptists formed churches of truly converted persons, on a basis of voluntary membership. They rejected infant-baptism because it was without Scriptural warrant and also because it implied an all-inclusive, non-ethical basis of church-membership. They re-baptized all who joined them who had been baptized in infancy. Hence their name Anabaptists (Re-baptizers), which was given to them by their enemies. They themselves disclaimed the name, since it implied that infant-baptism was a real baptism. From their point of view, their converts were baptized for the first time. They called themselves by the biblical names "brethren" or "disciples." In spite of their name, the Anabaptists did not, as a matter of fact, attribute as much significance to baptism as their Lutheran and Calvinist opponents. They disclaimed all notions of baptismal regeneration. For them, baptism was not a sacrament but an ordinance. They also taught that all unbaptized infants were saved. Nor did they accept the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Lord's Supper, which for them was an expression of personal faith in Christ and a festival of Christian fellowship, betokening mutual love and unity. Some combined with it the rite of washing one another's feet. Thus they felt that they were obeying the injunction of Christ in John xiii. 14 f.

The Anabaptist churches were organized in the simplest fashion, as became a movement essentially lay in its character. They rejected all priestly and hierarchical notions of the Christian ministry. "God's community," said one of them, "knows no head but Christ. No other can be endured." They also rejected all forms of State support and maintained their preachers by their free-will offerings. The one qualification they insisted upon in their preachers was a divine call to such service in the Church. Their forms of worship were as simple as their organization. Not all of their leaders belonged to the lower classes, as their rich hymnology and the writings of men like Hans Denck and Hübmaier make plain.

In their religious, political, social, and economic views the Anabaptists were the radicals of their time. It seemed to them that the Reformers had effected little more than a half-hearted compromise. The real aim of the Anabaptists was not to reform the Church of Rome, but to destroy it by the foundation of separate communities of wholly autonomous congregations. They stood for a complete separation of Church and State. They denied the right of the State to compel belief or regulate religion, and, therefore, exercised their own discipline over their members, by the democratic action of each congregation, and excommunicated all who were guilty of grave moral offences. Thus they came to advocate the complete disestablishment of religion, freedom of worship and universal toleration. Like all pioneers they sometimes carried their principles to extremes. Many of them believed that no true Christian could hold civil office. To do so conflicted with the principle of Christian equality and brotherhood. Moreover, it often required the infliction of capital punishment, against which they resolutely set their faces. For the same reason many refused to bear arms. The saying of Christ "Swear not at all" (Matt. v. 34) settled for them the question of taking oaths. They maintained that a man's solemn assertion was as sacred as an oath. Some of them practised a fully-developed Christian Communism, for which they found biblical warrant in Acts ii. 44 f. Those who did not go so far as this maintained that

all property belonged to God and should be used in ministering to the needy. They were also opposed to lending money on interest. The spirit of Christian brotherhood forbade the exploitation of the needs of a brother; and the practice was forbidden by Deut. xxiii. 19 f. and Psa. xv. 5.

The first Anabaptist church was founded in Zürich about 1525. The movement spread with amazing rapidity throughout Central and Western Europe. Everywhere it attracted to itself all who were dissatisfied with the Reformation and the remnants of the earlier medieval, evangelical groups. The Reformers, still wedded to the idea of a social order expressed in a State Church, saw in the Anabaptist Movement nothing less than the destruction of the very basis of society itself. Hence the sanguinary persecution with which the official churches met the new movement, which they decimated with savage cruelty. Thousands of Anabaptists were either beheaded or burned at the stake or drowned—drowning being deemed an appropriate punishment for such criminals. Thousands more were tortured and imprisoned. With characteristic candour Dr. W. R. Inge has said of these step-children of the Reformation, "Nothing can justify the atrocious cruelties practised on men and women who were generally both sincere and inoffensive, and whose opinions were on the whole in advance of their time."[1]

The following eloquent testimony of a Quaker scholar may supplement that of an Anglican. Of the Anabaptist Movement, Rufus M. Jones writes:

> It is the spiritual soil out of which all nonconformist sects have sprung, and it is the first plain announcement in modern history of a programme for a new type of Christian society which the modern world, especially in America and England, has been slowly realizing—an absolutely free and independent religious society, and a State in which every man counts as a man, and has his share in shaping both Church and State.[2]

It was the pressure of terrible persecution which drove certain Anabaptists in the lower Rhine-lands to the conclusion that the Last Days were at hand and that they were justified in attempting

[1] *Protestantism*, p. 39. [2] *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 369.

to set up the Heavenly Jerusalem by force of arms at Münster. Jan Matthys, a baker at Harlem, proclaimed himself the promised prophet Enoch and announced the establishment in the city of the earthly kingdom of Christ, in which there should be no magistracy, no law, no marriage, and no private property. Catholics and Lutherans fled, but thousands of persecuted Anabaptists flocked into the city. The Bishop of Münster and the neighbouring princes laid siege to Münster, within whose walls murder, crime, and polygamy ran riot. Matthys was killed and John of Leyden was proclaimed king and assumed the leadership of the new theocracy. The Anabaptists defended the city with fanatical zeal but it was finally captured in June 1535. The survivors were massacred after frightful tortures. Münster was a disaster for the whole Anabaptist Movement; and made its persecutors still more convinced that their oppressive measures were justifiable and right. The name Anabaptist became a by-word throughout Europe. Men felt that the whole movement was to be judged by what had happened at Münster, which was a terrible object lesson, making it plain that the logical outcome of Anabaptist principles was blasphemous indecency. Here, as so often, the right wing of a revolutionary movement had to suffer for the excesses of the left wing and even to be branded with opprobrium and scorn.

Almost immediately after the fall of Münster, Menno Simons (1496–1561) gathered together the quieter Anabaptists and reorganized them, repudiating all connexion with the fanatics of Münster. He had been a priest of the Roman Church which he left only after a long inward struggle.[1] He finally went over to the Anabaptists after seeing some hundreds of them, including his own brother, either killed or drowned. Under his leadership Anabaptism entered upon a new stage in its development. He accepted all the fundamental Anabaptist positions but stood out against all fanaticism and excesses. His followers, therefore, rejected infant-baptism, refused oaths and military service, and maintained a

[1] For the early career of Menno Simons, see Newman, *A History of Anti-Pedobaptism*, pp. 296 ff. The most recent biography is Horsch, *Menno Simons, His Life, Labours and Teaching* (Scottdale, Pa., 1916).

strict discipline over all church members, who were not allowed to marry outside the fellowship. In the interest of practical piety, they rejected all predestinarian views. They combined with the Lord's Supper the rite of feet-washing. They also adopted the peculiar Christology of Melchior Hoffmann. The question of the exact mode of the Incarnation was often canvassed among the Anabaptists. Hoffmann taught that the flesh of the Lord was a direct divine creation, which owed nothing physically to Mary through whom it passed "as light through a pane of glass." Like other Docetists, the Hoffmannites were so convinced of the Lord's divinity that they fell into doubt about the reality of His humanity.

The Mennonites soon became numerous in Holland. After the revolution of 1572, William of Orange protected them and ensured them their civil and religious rights, though they were frequently assailed by the preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church. In the days of Holland's prime, they included some of her greatest artists, poets, and engineers. As early as 1555, their unity was broken by a disagreement about the practice of excommunication. The Waterlanders (so called because they lived in that part of North Holland called Waterland) advocated a more lenient system of excommunication. Their spirit was more tolerant and liberal than that of the Flemish and Frisian Mennonites, who clung to more rigid ways. The leader of the Waterlanders was Hans de Ries (1553-1638), who comes into the story of the first English Baptists. Mennonite churches still exist in the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, France, Russia, the United States, and Canada. They adhere to the tenets of Menno Simons regarding baptism, oaths, civil office, military service, church discipline, and the management of the congregation. They do not associate with Baptists who, nevertheless, regard them as holding a place among those who anticipated their main ideas and doctrines.

Fugitive Anabaptists from the Netherlands and elsewhere made their way to England during the reign of Henry VIII, who had fourteen Dutch Anabaptists executed and others deported. They, doubtless, found sympathizers among those in whose minds the

teaching of the Lollards still lingered. A few societies of blameless people sprang up here and there,[1] but all parties in England were against them. After the Münster episode, they were regarded with loathing and as fit only to be put to death as the worst of heretics. Elizabeth, like her father, set her face against so dangerous a creed; and, in 1575, two Anabaptists were burnt at the stake in Smithfield " in great horror with roaring and crying." In 1589, it was reported that there were several Anabaptist societies in London and elsewhere; but, so far as we know, Anabaptism in England was never organized and lacked a real leader. For this reason it cannot be regarded as the seed-plot of the English Baptist movement[2] whose origin must be sought elsewhere, and is to be found among those native Englishmen who, in a spirit of radicalism and with their eyes on the New Testament, carried the principles of the English Reformation to their logical conclusion.

[1] See Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism*, pp. 149 ff. for the appearance in the reigns of Edward and Mary of a group of English sectaries "who may be called halfway Anabaptists."

[2] Knappen (*op. cit.* p. 315) says that "the available facts concerning the origin of the English Separatists have defied the best efforts of modern scholars to connect them with the Continental sectaries."

CHAPTER II

The First General Baptists

THE Protestant Reformation in England took a course peculiarly its own. No great, magnetic leaders appeared who proclaimed Reformation principles with prophetic passion and power; and, for a long time, the common people had no voice in the matter. It was the rulers who controlled and regulated the religious beliefs and practices of their subjects. Such reformation as there was in the reign of Henry VIII (1509–1547) was carried through by the king himself, using a subservient Parliament as his tool. Henry had no real intention of reforming the doctrine of the Church, but he was determined to get rid of papal jurisdiction. He saw to it that Parliament made him "the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England," and that both Convocations declared that the Pope had no greater jurisdiction in England "than any other foreign bishop."[1] What Henry wanted was Popery without the Pope. How mundane and political his reformation was is seen in his appointment of a layman, Thomas Cromwell, as Vicar-General in Spiritual Matters, and the use he made of him to plunder the monasteries. How determined he was to abide by Roman doctrine may be seen from the Act of Six Articles (1539) which imposed the death penalty on all who denied transubstantiation, and made the repudiation of clerical celibacy, auricular confession, and private masses a felony.

There were, however, even in Henry's reign those who desired a more thorough reformation of the State religion than the king

[1] The most important documents up to 1700 are printed in Gee and Hardy: *Documents Illustrative of English Church History.*

was prepared to sanction.[1] These took their chance when the boy king, Edward VI, succeeded his father in 1547. Many who had been driven into exile on the Continent by Henry's brutal despotism now came back, bringing with them the doctrines of Lutheran Germany and Calvinistic Zürich, Geneva, and Strassburg. A thorough attempt was made to purge the English Church of its abuses. Images and shrines were removed, the clergy were allowed to marry, the Sacrament was administered in two kinds, and the Prayer Book was drastically revised. The English Reformation was still in the experimental stage when Edward died before reaching his majority.

When, in 1553, Mary succeeded her brother, a Roman reaction immediately set in. The queen returned the country to the papal allegiance. Protestant bishops were deprived of their sees and hundreds of persons, including several bishops, were done to death for their religious opinions. It was an exhibition of cruelty such as had never before been seen in England and earned for the queen the title of "Bloody Mary." The stream of Protestant exiles to the Continent began again. About eight hundred persons in all crossed the Channel and settled for a time in such centres as Zürich, Geneva, Basel, Strassburg, Frankfort, and Emden, where they were brought into touch with a thoroughly reformed church life and imbibed a deep dislike of Anabaptist opinions. These exiles, who composed the left wing of the Edwardian reformation, made it their business to train students of divinity, who, it was hoped, would one day become the ministers of a truly reformed Church of England. Those who returned formed the nucleus of the Puritan party which emerged in the next reign.

When Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, she saw how necessary it was to steer a middle course. She was determined that England should not come under the Papacy again, but she had no liking for Calvinism. What her own religious convictions were, no one ever knew or ever will know. All we know is that she liked ceremonial and preferred an unmarried clergy whom she wished to be learned. Throughout her reign, in dealing with

[1] See Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism*, pp. 31 ff.

Church affairs, she acted through Parliament, but she did not hesitate to press her own views upon it and to rate soundly all recalcitrant members. Parliament, not Convocation, was the source of ecclesiastical legislation. It passed the Act of Supremacy which made her "Supreme Governor" of the Church, and an Act of Uniformity which enforced under heavy penalties attendance at the parish churches and re-imposed the Book of Common Prayer. The Articles of Religion were reduced in number to their present thirty-nine, subscription to them being required of all the clergy. Such was the so-called Elizabethan Settlement of Religion, the main features of which abide to this day. The Romanizing bishops, who had been placed by Mary in various sees, were deprived. Rome replied to all these changes with a bull excommunicating the queen. As the bull released Elizabeth's subjects from their oath of allegiance to her, her life was thereafter more than once threatened by Roman Catholic plots.

It was during the reign of Elizabeth that the Puritan Party first came into prominence. The Marian exiles, who came back from the Continent, were convinced by what they had seen there that the English Church required a much more thorough reformation than the half-hearted compromise carried through by Elizabeth and her Parliament. The Elizabethan Puritans desired that bishops should be abolished or, at least, their powers restricted, since both their office and their lordship over the Church were unscriptural. In their opinion the constitution for a reformed Church was revealed in the Scriptures. It was presbyterian and not episcopal, for the New Testament provided no warrant for three orders of ministers. In it bishop and presbyter were simply two names for one and the same office. At a time when many of the clergy were notoriously inefficient, these early Puritans demanded ministers who were learned and good preachers. They inveighed against pluralism and non-residence, and the money wasted on the cathedrals. They objected to many things in the Prayer Book, challenging such phrases as "With this ring, I thee wed" in the Marriage Service, and "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" in the Ordination Service. They objected to the sign of the Cross in Baptism, the

wearing of the surplice in the church and the gown and square cap in daily life, dubbing such things "the remnants, relics and leavings of the Pope and papistry." They disliked the Service for the Churching of Women as Jewish and superstitious. Kneeling at Communion they denounced as implying the doctrine of transubstantiation. They also raised objection to the Burial Service and the observance of Holy Days as popish.

When their numbers had grown, these Elizabethan Puritans made a well-organized attempt to form a shadow church of their own which at a favourable moment could take over the State Church.[1] They were well represented in Elizabeth's Parliaments, as well as among the bishops, clergy and laity; and they were energetic propagandists and pamphleteers at a time when the whole nation was profoundly interested in religious matters. They were also able to take full advantage of the anti-Roman feeling which swept through the country from time to time, as, for example, when the news reached England of the massacre of the Huguenots in Paris on St. Bartholomew's Day in 1572. Indeed, in that year, it looked as if the Puritans might succeed in capturing the Church of England. The queen declared that they were "greater enemies to her than the Papists." In her forceful way she saw to it that they were silenced, deprived of their benefices and imprisoned. Many were cited to appear before the ecclesiastical courts, where they were often roughly handled and abused as traitors, rebels, and arrogant fools.

It is important to bear in mind that the Elizabethan Puritans had no intention of leaving the Established Church. Their aim was to stay inside it and to reform it from within. They were as much enamoured of the Church-type of organization as Elizabeth herself and scorned the Sect-type of Christianity. They aimed at capturing for their own party the ecclesiastical machinery and its endowments which had been left over when Roman Catholicism was driven out. The Elizabethan Settlement of Religion gave these to the Episcopalians. The Puritans wanted them for Calvinistic Presbyterians. Like Elizabeth, they wanted religious uniformity,

[1] The most recent account of this attempt is in Knappen, *op. cit.*, pp. 283 ff.

but after the Genevan pattern, with all the unscriptural features of the Prayer Book swept away and the Royal Supremacy abolished—a more drastic purge than Elizabeth was prepared to administer. The conception of liberty of conscience was an idea foreign to them. Hence when the first Separatists appeared the Puritans denounced them in unmeasured terms, and advocated their forcible suppression. In those days few, if any, dreamed of challenging the axiom that a man's religion is the State's affair.

Towards the end of Elizabeth's reign small groups appeared among the Puritans who had come to feel how hopeless it was to stay within the State Church, working and hoping for better days. They decided to go out of it and to seek for a thorough reformation "without tarrying for any." These Separatists (as they are called to distinguish them from the general Puritan body) had, moreover, come to dislike the idea that all the baptized persons in a parish were members of the Church. They reverted to the Sect-type of Christianity and maintained that the Church should consist of men and women who had consciously dedicated themselves to Christ and His service. For this reason they called the groups they formed "gathered churches," to differentiate them from the parish churches of which men were members from their birth or baptism as infants. The leaders of these Separatists, who were the founders of modern Congregationalism, were Robert Browne, Henry Barrow, John Greenwood, and John Penry. There is good reason for believing that there were organized Separatist churches of the Congregational Order ten or more years before 1580. The authorities were so determined on the suppression of these sectaries that their London leaders (Barrow, Greenwood, and Penry) were hanged in 1593. Numbers of them fled to Holland, then the home of religious liberty.

It was clear that while Elizabeth ruled no kind of nonconformity, Puritan or Separatist, would be allowed to flourish in peace. Therefore, towards the end of her reign, the Puritans turned their eyes hopefully to her heir. The future James I had been, they noted, brought up in Scotland, where episcopacy had been abolished and the State Church had become Calvinistic and Presby-

terian. James was destined to disappoint the Puritans. He kept the Calvinistic theology which he had imbibed in Scotland and sent two representatives of the Church of England to the Synod of Dort (1619) which condemned Arminianism. Presbyterianism he rejected because he hated its democratic tendencies. "No bishop, no king," he remarked; adding, "A Scottish Presbytery as well agreeth with a Monarchy as God and the devil. Then Jack and Tom, and Will, and Dick shall meet, and at their pleasure censure me and my Council, and all our proceedings: then Will shall stand up and say, it must be thus; then Dick shall reply and say, nay, . . . but we will have it thus." The Hampton Court Conference met in 1603 to give the Puritans an opportunity of discussing with the Bishops the reform of the Church. James, who prided himself on his theological learning, presided and he ended the Conference by threatening to "make the Puritans conform themselves, or else harry them out of the land." He made it clear that he had no intention of weakening the Elizabethan Settlement, and continued the policy, inherited from Elizabeth, of making the laity attend the services of the State Church and of enforcing uniformity. In a single year (1604) no fewer than three hundred[1] Puritan clergy were ejected, while the Separatists were constantly persecuted by the ecclesiastical authorities for breaking the law of attendance at public worship.

The above rapid sketch of the course of the Reformation in England will help us to understand the life and opinions of John Smyth, the first English Baptist. In his own life he epitomized all its main stages. He began as a son of the Church of England and took her Orders, and progressively became Puritan, Separatist, and then a Baptist Separatist.

John Smyth is such a common name that it is impossible to trace our John Smyth's family and birthplace. We get our first glimpse of him in 1586 at Cambridge when he matriculated as a sizar of Christ's College. At that time Cambridge had strong

[1] This is the traditional figure. It may be exaggerated. See Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, pp. 381 ff.

puritan leanings and Smyth's tutor was none other than Francis Johnson, who later advanced from Puritanism to Separatism and finally became the pastor of a church of English Separatists in Holland. Doubtless it was from Francis Johnson that Smyth's mind received its strong puritan bent. In 1594, Smyth was appointed a Fellow of his College and was ordained by the Bishop of Lincoln. Four years later, he vacated his Fellowship on his marriage. He avoided taking a living, where the bishop of the diocese could harry him into uniformity, and became instead a city-lecturer. These lectureships, which were supported out of town funds or by private persons, owed their existence to the eagerness of Puritan congregations to supplement the official ministrations of the Church. Ardent Puritans accepted these appointments because of the liberty they gave them. In 1600, Smyth was appointed Lecturer to the City of Lincoln at what was then the handsome stipend of forty pounds per annum, with £3 6s. 8d. yearly towards house rent and "leave to keep three kine upon the commons." But within two years he was driven from his office on the charge of introducing personalities into his sermons. For a time he supported himself by practising as a physician. After many misgivings and a great deal of anxious consideration, he decided about 1606 to separate from the Church of England. He found a body of Separatists at Gainsborough and was chosen and ordained as their pastor. The members of this church covenanted together "As the Lord's free people, . . . to walk in all His ways, made known or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavours, whatsoever it might cost them, the Lord assisting them." Whitley has well said that "there was a fine touch of modesty and expectancy here; they did not think they had reached finality, but they were ready to live up to all the light to be vouchsafed."[1]

The ecclesiastical authorities were not long in discovering and persecuting this Separatist church, which in 1608 emigrated to Amsterdam, the funds for the emigration being provided, apparently, by a well-to-do member of the church, Thomas

[1] H.B.B. p. 20.

Helwys of Broxtowe Hall, Nottinghamshire.[1] Arrived in Amsterdam, Smyth and his flock settled in the mass of buildings attached to the Great Bakehouse of the Mennonite, Jan Munter. But life in Amsterdam was not exactly what the exiles expected to find it. The communities which had exiled themselves to the Continent for religion's sake had always led a disturbed life. Quarrels were always liable to break out among them. They were too much shut in among themselves—little islands of English life in a foreign land. What Miss Garrett has said about the Marian exiles applies to them all. "They experienced all the evils of overcrowding, from exacerbated tempers to the plague."[2] But the quarrels, it should be remembered, were due also to the intellectual and spiritual restlessness of the age.

In Amsterdam Smyth found other English congregations of Separatists. There was the one from London led by Francis Johnson and another from Scrooby led by John Robinson.[3] Smyth was soon engaged in controversy with them. He differed from Johnson on the use of Scripture in divine worship and even went to the length of breaking communion on the point. Smyth held that the reading of the English translation was not an integral part of divine worship, though it might be used as a means to prepare for spiritual worship. He thought that the person who was teaching should bring with him the original Hebrew and Greek and translate them by voice. It is important to grasp his reasons for this, which are not as finicky as one might suppose. He was of opinion that to read the English translation savoured of formality: there would be less quenching of the Spirit if a free translation were made on the spot. Moreover, he recognized that the churches of the New Testament did not possess for use at their worship all the books of the New Testament, for some of them were in all the fulness of their life before

[1] The towns and villages in a wide circle around Gainsborough contributed members to the church. See map in Whitley's edition of *The Works of John Smyth*, Vol. I, p. lv.

[2] *The Marian Exiles*, p. 20.

[3] It is worth noting that Smyth had considerable influence over Robinson before they both went to Holland, with the result that Smyth's language and ideas passed, by way of Robinson, to the Pilgrim Fathers.

the books were written. Therefore, he argued, the use of Scripture as an integral part of divine worship is not required of those who seek to approximate to the New Testament model. Moreover, he pointed out that the original Hebrew and Greek were inspired but translations were not, since they were the work of men and, therefore, subject to imperfection and error. A written translation, he maintained, was as much a human writing as a homily or written prayer. Smyth also objected to sermons being read and to psalms being sung from a book. He maintained that the collection for church expenses was an act of worship to be hallowed by prayer and that outsiders should not be allowed to contribute.

At the same time, Smyth was busy clarifying his ideas about the officers needed by a church. In his Gainsborough days he had published his *Principles and inferences concerning the visible Church*, in which he contended that the officers of a true visible Church are of two kinds: (i) Bishops, who in the New Testament are also called Elders or Presbyters, and (ii) Deacons. The method of receiving officers into office is by election, approbation and ordination. Election is by the majority of the votes of the members in full communion. "Approbation is the examining and finding the officer elect to be according to the rules of his office. . . . In approbation every member is bound to object what he can, especially they that denied their votes."[1] Ordination must be performed with fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands. The use of imposition of hands is twofold: first, to point out the officer in time of prayer made for him, as if it should be said "This is the man"; secondly, to signify and to assure the officer to be ordained that the Lord by the Church giveth him power to administer. The power of binding and loosing was given by Christ not to the Pope or the Bishops or the Elders but "to the body of the Church, even to two or three faithful people joined together in covenant."[2] Now in Amsterdam, Smyth challenged the claims of officialdom by asking, "Whether the eldership hath not all their power from the Church? Whether,

[1] *Works* (ed. Whitley), Vol. I, pp. 256 ff. [2] *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 388.

seeing the Church may depose and excommunicate the eldership, they may not pass other sentences without or contrary to their liking?"[1] These questions arose out of Smyth's knowledge that in Francis Johnson's church the powers given to the elders ruled out government by the members.

It is important to realize that Smyth was endeavouring to build his church according to the New Testament model. He had a singularly open mind and now he took another step forward and adopted the Baptist position. Examination of the New Testament convinced him that baptism upon profession of repentance towards God and faith in Christ was the New Testament method of admitting to church fellowship, and that the New Testament knew nothing of the baptism of infants. Smyth then drew the logical inference that the baptism which he and his congregation had received in the parish churches of England was worthless. They had been attempting to set up a church on the New Testament model and had failed to observe the New Testament conditions of entrance. There was nothing to do but to begin again and to reconstitute the Church, not on a basis of mutual covenant between its members, but by the baptism of all professed believers.

This very question had been raised earlier among the English Separatists[2] but they had shirked the issue, mainly because they hesitated to identify themselves in any way with the despised Anabaptists. But John Smyth was not the kind of man to be held back by such considerations; and he carried his congregation with him in his change of views. "Pastor and deacons laid down their office, the church disbanded or avowed itself no church, and all stood as private individuals, unbaptized. All being equal, Smyth proposed that Helwys their social leader should baptize them, but he deferred to his spiritual leader. Smyth therefore baptized himself, then baptized Helwys and the others. Thus, and not by the Old Testament ceremony of covenanting, they

[1] *Works* (ed. Whitley), Vol. II, p. 326.

[2] For details see Burrage, Vol. I, pp. 221 ff. and Whitley, *The Works of John Smyth*, Vol. I, p. xcii. Burrage shows that an unnamed Englishman baptized himself and others in Amsterdam before 1600.

prepared for a New Testament church of people baptized on profession of their repentance and faith in Christ."[1] In this manner, in 1609, the first English Baptist Church was founded though not on English soil. It was a church of baptized believers but they were not baptized by immersion but by affusion. The water used was contained in a basin. The person officiating took a handful of water from the basin and poured it on the head of the person he was baptizing. Probably the water was also applied to the forehead by gentle rubbing to symbolize the idea of cleansing.[2]

The action taken by Smyth and his church provided more fuel for the controversy between him and the other Separatist leaders in Amsterdam. They charged him with inconsistency and changeableness. He replied that a change for the better is always commendable.

> That we should fall (he wrote) from the profession of Puritanism to Brownism, and from Brownism to true Christian baptism, is not simply evil or reprovable in itself, except it be proved that we have fallen from true religion. If we therefore, being formerly deceived in the way of pedobaptistry, now do embrace the truth in the true Christian Apostolic baptism, then let no man impute this as a fault unto us.[3]

At great length and in the syllogistic fashion of the times, Smyth set forth his position positively by stating and maintaining two propositions: Infants are not to be baptized, because there is neither precept nor example in the New Testament of any infants that were baptized. Only they that did confess their sins and confess their faith were baptized; Antichristians converted are to be admitted into the true Church by baptism.[4]

Smyth was, of course, much criticized for baptizing himself and dubbed the Se-Baptist, or Self-baptizer. Borrowing weapons from his own armoury, his critics asked him where he found any warrant in Scripture for what he had done. He had done,

[1] Whitley, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. xciii.

[2] See Whitley, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. xciv ff., and Dexter in Bibliography at the end of this volume.

[3] *Works*, Vol. II, p. 564.

[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 574. "Antichristians" was the term used by Separatists for those who came over to them from the Established Church.

they said, more than Christ Himself would have done, for He went to John for baptism. At first Smyth replied vigorously, saying that "it was as sensible for a man to baptize himself as to administer the Lord's Supper to himself, which was enjoyed in the Prayer Book in harmony with unbroken custom."[1] Another critic asked him why he had not gone for his baptism to one of the elders of the Dutch Anabaptists. This remark turned his attention to the Waterlander Mennonites with whom he soon opened communications. This time Smyth failed to carry all his people with him. He carried the majority but Thomas Helwys and about ten others stood out. They had serious misgivings about the Hoffmannite Christology of the Mennonites and it seemed to them that Smyth was imperilling their stand against the old idea of a succession of ministers, to which the Mennonites attached real importance. Helwys took the view that, if elders only could baptize, it was tantamount to going back to the idea of an apostolic succession. He asked, "Hath the Lord thus restrained His Spirit, His Word and ordinances as to make particular men lords over them, or keepers of them? God forbid. This is contrary to the liberty of the Gospel, which is free for all men, at all times and in all places." The Helwys group therefore excommunicated Smyth and proclaimed themselves "the true Church."

Undisturbed Smyth went on with his negotiations with the Mennonites with whom he exchanged confessions of faith. He made a formal application to the Waterlanders for admission to their church. The document in Smyth's handwriting is still extant in the Mennonite archives, and gives the names of fourteen men and seventeen women who joined with Smyth in making the application. They acknowledge their mistake in making an independent beginning, when there was a church within reach in which they could have obtained baptism. The document is headed: "The names of the English who acknowledge this their error and repent of it, viz., that they took in hand to baptize themselves, contrary to the order laid down by Christ: and who

[1] Whitley, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. xcviii.

now desire henceforth to be united to a true Church of Christ, as speedily as possible." Then follow the names of the men and women, arranged in separate columns. The document concludes: "We unanimously desire this resolution of ours to be communicated to the Church."[1]

For a variety of reasons the Waterlanders hesitated. They had to secure the approval of other Mennonite churches. Moreover, Thomas Helwys and his associates intervened and wrote opposing the application and putting their own point of view. They cite the case of John the Baptist to prove that an unbaptized person may inaugurate baptism. They claim that

> whosoever shall now be stirred by the same Spirit to preach the same Word, and men thereby being converted, may, according to John's example, wash them with water, and who can forbid? . . . And now for the other question, that elders must ordain elders; or if this be a perpetual rule, then from whom is your eldership come? And if one church might once ordain, then why not all the churches always?[2]

Smyth's health was now beginning to decline but he kept his pen busy. He drew up for his followers a declaration of their faith in one hundred propositions which expanded the Latin Confession in twenty propositions which he had presented to the Waterlanders in the course of his negotiations with them. This long declaration of faith[3] is noteworthy by reason of the fact that it reveals that Smyth had left behind the Calvinism of the English Separatists and had adopted Arminian opinions. He asserts that God created man with freedom of will; that original sin is an idle term, because God threatened death only to Adam and not to his posterity; that infants are conceived and born in innocency without sin, and so dying are undoubtedly saved and this is to be understood of all infants under heaven;

[1] The document is in Latin. The text is printed in Whitley's edition of *The Works of John Smyth*, Vol. II, p. 681. The frontispiece of the same volume is a photographic reproduction of the document. Knappen (*op. cit.*, 330) says that Smyth's application for fusion with the Mennonites is "the first discoverable tie between the English Separatists and the Anabaptists."

[2] This letter is printed by Evans (Vol. I, pp. 209 f.), Burrage (Vol. II, pp. 185 ff.), and Burgess, *John Smyth the Se-Baptist, Thomas Helwys and the First Baptist Church in England*, pp. 190 ff.

[3] *Works*, Vol. II, 733 ff

that God did not hate fallen Adam but loved him still; that as no man begets his child to the gallows, and no potter makes a pot to break it, so God does not create or predestinate any man to destruction; that God before the foundation of the world had determined the way of life and salvation to consist in Christ, and that He had foreseen who would follow it, and on the contrary had determined the way of perdition to consist in infidelity and impenitence, and that He had foreseen who would follow after it; that as God created all men according to His image, so He has redeemed all that fall by actual sin; that Christ's sacrifice of His body and blood upon the Cross reconciles us to God but not God to us, for God never did hate us nor was our enemy.[1]

From the same confession we may gather Smyth's opinions about the Church and the Sacraments and certain other matters. He declared that the outward Church visible consists of penitent persons only and of such as believing in Christ bring forth fruits worthy of repentance; that the visible Church is a mystical figure outwardly, of the true, spiritual, invisible Church which consists of the spirits of just and perfect men only, that is, of the regenerate; that all penitent and faithful Christians are brethren in the communion of the outward Church, wheresoever they live, by what name soever they are known: and "we salute them all with a holy kiss, being heartily grieved that we which follow after one Lord, one God, one body and one baptism, should be rent into so many sects and schisms, and that only for matters of less moment;" that baptism is to be administered only to penitent and believing persons and not to innocent infants or wicked persons; that only baptized persons should partake of the Lord's Supper; that Baptism and the Supper do not confer or convey grace and regeneration but serve only

[1] The precise source from which Smyth derived these anti-Calvinistic views cannot be determined. He may have got them from the Mennonites or from the debate then raging in Holland over the views of Arminius (d. 1609) or from his own study of the Bible or from the teaching of Peter Baro (1534–1599) who had caused a controversy in Cambridge by advocating views that would later have been called Arminian.

to support and stir up repentance and faith; that Christ hath set two sorts of ministers in His Church: some who are called pastors, teachers or elders, who minister in the Word and Sacraments, and others called deacons, men and women, whose ministry is to serve tables and wash the feet of the saints; that there is no succession in the outward Church but all succession is from heaven, but since God is not a God of confusion but of order it is not lawful for every brother to administer the Word and the Sacraments; that the office of the magistrate is a permissive ordinance of God for the good of mankind and that justice may be preserved among men but it is not an office which a Christian can hold; that members of Christ's Church should not go to law before civil magistrates but settle their disputes among themselves; that neither the taking of oaths nor marriage with an unbeliever is allowable.

Article 84 is of sufficient importance to be dealt with separately. It reads:

> (We believe) that the magistrate is not by virtue of his office to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience, to force and compel men to this or that form of religion or doctrine: but to leave the Christian religion free to every man's conscience, and to handle only civil transgressions, injuries and wrongs of men against man, in murder, adultery, theft, etc., for Christ only is the king and lawgiver of the Church and conscience.

Much could be said about this splendid enunciation of the principle of freedom of religion for all men. We content ourselves with quoting what Jordan has said in his massive work on the subject: "It is evident that Smyth had renounced completely the philosophical bases of persecution and that, despite the intense evangelical zeal of the Baptists, he would spread religious truth among unbelievers only with the spiritual agencies in which he reposed such complete confidence."[1] We must, however, add that Smyth's was the first claim for full religious liberty ever penned in the English language.[2]

[1] Vol. II, pp. 273 ff.

[2] See Lyon, *The Theory of Religious Liberty in England*, 1603–39, pp. 109 ff., for the gradual development of Smyth's thought. Congregationalists at this

Towards the end of August 1612 Smyth died of consumption. His church made another application to be united with the Mennonites. This time they were successful and were admitted as members of the Waterlander Church on January 21, 1615. After a time they learned the Dutch language and intermarried with the Dutch and so eventually were lost as a separate community.

The last few months of Smyth's life were among his best and brought out his true spirit. He declined all debate, taught his children, comforted his wife, cheered his brethren, examined his own life and manifested a fine charity to all true Christians. In his last book,[1] which he probably never finished and which was published by one of his followers shortly after his death, Smyth admits that he was "somewhat lavish in censuring and judging others." He expresses regret for anything censorious in his writings against the Church of England and the Separatists. He retracts all "biting and bitter words, phrases and speeches." He re-states his opinions, which had caused so much controversy, but this time in a thoroughly judicial and eirenic spirit. He deals with the two main charges which Helwys had brought against him. The first was that he had fallen back into the old erroneous ideas of succession in seeking to join the Mennonites. To this Smyth replies:

> I deny all succession except in the truth: and I hold that we are not to violate the order of the primitive Church, except necessity urge a dispensation: and therefore it is not lawful for every one that seeth the truth to baptize, for then there might be as many churches as couples in the world, and none have anything to do with the other: which breaketh the bond of love and brotherhood in churches.[2]

The second charge was that Smyth had accepted the Hoffmannite Christology. To this he replies that he now believes that it is better to attribute Christ's flesh to His mother, Mary; yet he dare

time were asserting that the churches "ought to be overseen and kept in good order, and peace, and ought to be governed (under Christ) both supremely and subordinately by the civil magistrate; yea in causes of religion when need is" (Henry Jacob).

[1] Haller, who is not very sympathetic to Smyth, says of this book that it is "one of the clearest, most intense, and least encumbered by cant or jargon, in the whole body of Puritan confessional writing" (*op. cit.*, p. 204).

[2] *Works*, Vol. II, p. 758.

not make it an article of faith without going beyond what is written in the Scripture on the question "whereof Christ's natural flesh was made." It is more important, he says, that "we should search into Christ's spiritual flesh, to be made flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone in the communion and fellowship of the same spirit."[1] He thanks Helwys for his kindness to him when he was sick in England. "I would have given him satisfaction," he says, "and he refused it, and in my sickness there was as much brought in as I spent."

Smyth's last book is also remarkable by reason of the fact that it indicates that as his life was closing he sat rather loosely to all ordinances and organization. In Articles 61 and 62 of his long confession of faith, he had said that the regenerate man "needeth not the outward scriptures, creatures or ordinances of the Church, to support or help them, seeing he hath three witnesses in himself, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost." But he added that the regenerate, "in love to others, can and will do no other than use the outward things of the Church, for the gaining and supporting of others: and so the outward Church and ordinances are always necessary, for all sorts of persons whatsoever." In his last words he went even further. After saying about baptism, "I hold as I did, and therein I am persuaded I have the truth," he wrote:

> I profess that difference in judgement for matter of circumstance, as are all things of the outward Church, shall not cause me to refuse the brotherhood of any penitent and faithful Christian whatsoever. And now from this day forward do I put an end to all controversies and questions, about the outward Church and ceremonies with all men, and resolve to spend my time in the main matters wherein consisteth salvation. Without repentance, faith, remission of sin, and the new creature there is no salvation. But there is salvation without the truth of all the outward ceremonies of the outward Church.[2]

John Smyth had a common enough name but he was far from being an ordinary man. His faults were those of his age and his career illustrates the difficulties and inevitable stumblings of a pathfinder. He was extremely sensitive to new light and singularly fearless in acting upon his convictions, and was, therefore, often in

[1] *Works*, Vol. II, p. 759.

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 755.

advance of his age. He was a man of transparent sincerity who dared to acknowledge his own mistakes. The quest of his life was for a visible Church after the ideas and according to the teaching of the New Testament. First he asked the question, Of what kind of persons ought the Church to consist? The answer that the Church was something which the State could not create and that it must consist of regenerate persons took him out of Puritanism into Separatism. Once he had seized upon the idea of a "gathered" church, he was bound to ask whether its idea of a regenerate membership was consistent with the baptism of infants. What spiritual character had they to qualify them for membership? How could they be personally conscious Christians? Smyth saw that infants had no more right to church-membership than Englishmen had because they had been born and baptized in a Christian parish. To his keen mind the dilemma confronting the Separatists was clear cut: they must either go back to the parish churches or forward to true baptism after the New Testament model.

Smyth also had the true leader's magnetic gift of winning the affection of others. After his separation from him, Helwys could write: "All our love was too little for him and not worthy of him." To him belongs the imperishable honour of being the first Englishman to plead for full liberty of conscience. Striking indeed is the tribute paid to him by the great historian, Mandell Creighton:

> None of the English Separatists had a finer mind or a more beautiful soul than John Smyth. None of them succeeded in expressing with so much reasonableness and consistency their aspirations after a spiritual system of religious beliefs and practice. None of them founded their opinions on so large and liberal a basis.[1]

Smyth died before he was forty-five. It seemed as though he had spent his life in vain, but he stands at the fountain-head of consecutive Baptist history. He may be regarded as the father and founder of the organized Baptists of England and of the General Baptists in particular. After the lapse of three hundred years he

[1] *Historical Lectures and Addresses*, p. 56. Creighton was evidently much impressed by Smyth's last confession of faith in one hundred propositions.

must be placed in the vanguard of what is now an ecumenical communion.

We must now follow the fortunes of the group which, under the leadership of Thomas Helwys, had separated themselves from Smyth's church. Helwys came of a good family which had its seat at Broxtowe Hall, near Nottingham.[1] He was educated at Gray's Inn which then gave a general education as well as a legal training. After three years in London, he returned to Broxtowe, married and settled down as a country gentleman. His home was a place of call for all clergy with Puritan leanings. Helwys and his wife came to know Smyth and joined the Separatist church in Gainsborough. When he fled with the others to Holland, he left his wife behind with his children, possibly thinking that she would be left untouched. But the ecclesiastical authorities, annoyed at his escape, threw her into prison at York.

Helwys and his group in Amsterdam became convinced that their flight from persecution had been a mistake, because, as he said, "thousands of ignorant souls in our own country were perishing for lack of instruction." They therefore returned to London about the end of 1612, knowing perfectly well the dangers they ran. They founded in 1612 the first Baptist Church on English soil in Spitalfields outside the walls of the City of London. "It was a church led and officered by laymen. It had been tested by the trials of exile and the fires of controversy. . . . It was deprived almost at once of its chief leaders by imprisonment, but it still held together. These brave men and women were dignified by the greatness of the cause they had espoused."[2] As Helwys had accepted Smyth's Arminian opinions, this church was a General Baptist Church, holding that in the divine intention Christ died for all men and not, as the Calvinists said, only for the elect. Helwys proclaimed his faith in the title he gave to one of his books: *A Short and Plaine Proofe, by the Word and Works of God, that Gods Decree is not the Cause of anye Mans Sinne or Condemnation:*

[1] Burgess has traced the pedigree of the Helwys family in *Trans. Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. III, pp. 18 ff.
[2] Burgess, *op. cit.*, pp. 282 ff.

and That all Men are redeemed by Christ; as also That no Infants are condemned.

On some other points, however, Helwys was most anxious to dissociate himself from the views of the Mennonites and Smyth. Though he accepted what for convenience we may call the Arminian views of Smyth and the Mennonites, he nevertheless repudiated the concomitant belief in human freedom, which he called "that most damnable heresy." He re-stated the point on which he had separated from his former leader, "that there is no succession or privilege in holy things." This, doubtless, is what led his congregation to maintain that church officers may hold office only in the church in which they have been ordained to that office. Helwys also differed from Smyth and the Mennonites by defending the taking of oaths and maintaining that the magistracy was a holy ordinance of God which debarred no man from membership in the Church of Christ. Against the Hoffmannite views of the Mennonites he contended that "Christ took His flesh of Mary, having a true earthly, natural body."[1]

In 1612, Helwys published his *A short Declaration of the Mistery of Iniquity*. It was the first demand made in England for universal religious liberty—for freedom of conscience for all. The treatise runs to over two hundred pages and some of it makes curious reading. Its pith is expressed in the following words:

> Our lord the king is but an earthly king, and he hath no authority as a king but in earthly causes, and if the king's people be obedient and true subjects, obeying all human laws made by the king, our lord and king can require no more: for men's religion to God is betwixt God and themselves; the king shall not answer for it, neither may the king be judge between God and man. Let them be heretics, Turks, Jews or whatsoever, it appertains not to the earthly power to punish them in the least measure (p. 69).

Once again we may quote the words of an impartial historian. Jordan says[2] that "Helwys gave to religious toleration the finest and fullest defence which it had ever received in England." After a full examination of Helwys' thought, he concludes:

[1] For further detail on all these points see Burgess, *op. cit.*, pp. 226 ff. and Burrage, Vol. I, pp. 252 ff.

[2] Vol. II, p. 274.

Not only was he one of the first men in England to conclude that persecution even of the most serious spiritual error was in itself iniquitous, but he was the founder in England of a sect which was never to depart widely from the principles which he had enunciated. He gave to the magistrate the fullest authority in civil matters, but declared that so far as the Church was concerned he had no greater power than any other layman.[1]

Only four copies of *The Mistery of Iniquity* now survive and the one in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, contains, in what is assumed to be Helwys' own handwriting, a dedication to King James I. It is a fair inference that it is the copy which Helwys himself sent to the king. His words are remarkable for their fearless courage, especially if we bear in mind what Helwys must have known of the king's ideas about his royal prerogatives.

Hear, O King, and despise not the counsel of the poor, and let their complaints come before thee. The king is a mortal man and not God: therefore hath no power over the immortal souls of his subjects, to make laws and ordinances for them, and to set spiritual Lords over them. If the king have authority to make spiritual Lords and laws, then he is an immortal God, and not a mortal man. O King, be not seduced by deceivers to sin against God whom thou oughtest to obey, nor against thy poor subjects who ought and will obey thee in all things with body, life and goods, or else let their lives be taken from the earth. God save the King. Spittlefield, near London. Tho. Helwys.[2]

Clearly the authorities could not ignore such a challenge. Helwys was thrown into prison. We know that by 1616 he was dead because, in that year, his uncle, Geoffrey Helwys, bequeathed a legacy of ten pounds to his widow.

The mantle of leadership now fell upon John Murton. He was a Gainsborough man who, in 1609, had joined John Smyth's church. In Amsterdam he had worked as a furrier and had returned to London with Helwys in 1612. He also put out a plea for liberty of conscience in which he showed all his leader's fearlessness. Their treatises "were not the brave utterances of men who were safely

[1] Vol. II, p. 283.

[2] For King James' justification of religious persecution, see Lyon, *op. cit.*, p. 50. In 1935 the Baptist Historical Society reproduced *The Mistery of Iniquity* by the Replika process, with a valuable introduction by Dr. H. Wheeler Robinson.

across the sea in Holland."[1] According to an early tradition, recorded by Roger Williams, Murton's treatise was written in milk brought in daily in a bottle which had a sheet of rolled-up paper for a stopper. The written sheet was returned as the stopper of the empty bottle and deciphered by a friend.

Another defender of religious liberty belonging to the same group was Leonard Busher, about whom little is known. Of him Jordan says that he "gave to the idea of religious liberty a full, critical, and reasonably objective consideration."[2]

> He displayed rancour towards no Christian communion, though he bitterly condemned both the Roman Church and the Established Church, for their persecuting tendencies. . . . It is impossible not to admire both the fearlessness of his thought and the boldness of his tone; here we have no abject pleading by a sectary for the bare toleration of his own group, but a thoughtful and noble demand for religious liberty for all men because they are men ordained by God to share in the general redemption through the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice.[3]

The last phrase of the above quotation deserves amplification. The Congregationalist Separatists, at this stage in their development, put out no plea for universal toleration, because their minds were still imbued with the Calvinistic idea that it was the duty of the civil powers to encourage true religion and to suppress the false. These early General Baptists believed that no man was predestined by a divine decree to damnation but that all men might repent and believe the Gospel—none were irretrievably lost. They, therefore, drew the inference that to destroy a man for his mistaken beliefs might defeat the purpose of God for that man's salvation. While he lived he might yet be saved from the error of his ways, if the truth were presented to him in spiritual forms and no coercion applied to his conscience. It was, therefore, no accident that the General Baptists were the first to plead for complete freedom of conscience for all.

The church founded by Helwys in Spitalfields continued on its way and survived to the end of the nineteenth century. Its earliest

[1] Jordan, Vol. II, p. 299. Jordan gives a detailed analysis of Murton's thought. See pages 298–314. [2] Vol. II, p. 296. [3] Vol. II, p. 298.

minute books, dating from 1681, are now in the Guildhall Library.[1] In 1624, it excluded Elias Tookey and some others who formed a church south of the river in Southwark. This church still exists in Deptford but is now Unitarian. Tookey wrote to the Waterlander Church in Amsterdam, in which Smyth's English congregation had been incorporated, seeking their support and explaining that he and his friends had been excommunicated by Murton. The Dutch displayed their usual caution and made careful and specific inquiries in the correspondence which ensued. What made them hesitate was that Tookey and his followers thought it right to celebrate the Lord's Supper in the absence of an ordained minister. The Waterlanders, still under the leadership of Hans de Ries, also wanted assurances that all the members of Tookey's group accepted the deity of Christ and were unwilling to take oaths or to accept military service. As neither party would yield to the other, nothing came of Tookey's overture.

In 1626, we find Murton's church making an approach to the Dutch and with it are associated churches at Lincoln, Coventry, Salisbury, and Tiverton. In that year these five churches sent two messengers with a letter to the Waterlander Church with a view to strengthening friendly relations. Again, the same difficulties arose for the two delegates insisted that unordained members of the church might "preach, convert, baptize, and perform other public actions with the consent of the church, when bishops are not present." They also defended the right of a Christian to accept the office of magistrate and to bear arms. In the end the Mennonites, who throughout the negotiations had displayed a brotherly spirit, declined to enter into organic union, though they were prepared to maintain friendly relations.

In 1630, the Dutch-English Waterlander Church sent John Drew, a Lincoln man, to the five churches in England with a letter asking them not to be too hasty in disciplining any member and to restore speedily those who had been suspended. We do not know what caused the Waterlanders to send this letter, though, as

[1] The minute book, from 1680 to 1740, of the Glasshouse Yard General Baptist Church is now in the Library of Regent's Park College, Oxford.

we have already remarked, the Waterlanders were more lenient than other Mennonites in their church discipline. It is possible that the Tookey group had again invoked their good offices. The replies of the Lincoln and Tiverton Churches have been preserved. Lincoln said that the matter was not "of so little importance as you seem to consider it." The offender had been admonished and rebuked but was still impenitent, and had, therefore, to be excluded from the Lord's Supper. The reply from the Tiverton Church reveals that the English Baptist Churches were disciplining their members for attending the services of the Established Church. The Tiverton Church turned the tables on the Waterlanders by saying that if it had known that they would tolerate such laxity, it would never have sought union with them in 1626. "We should first have worked at your reformation," the Tiverton letter rather tartly says. It also endorsed the views of the Lincoln Church on magistracy and war. The correspondence was not renewed. One or two persons, such as Murton's widow, singly crossed to Holland and were received into the Dutch-English Church in Amsterdam; but there was no transfer from church to church. Thereafter all intercourse apparently ceased till 1696, when the General Baptists sent from London a letter commending to the Waterlander Church, Christian Ludwig, who was empowered to explain the standard Confession of 1660.[1]

The correspondence is important as showing that as early as 1626 the original church of Helwys had four sister-churches in London and the home counties and was able to take joint action with them. All must have had a hard struggle to exist. Their Arminianism made them obnoxious to the Puritans, to the Independent Separatists and also to the vast majority of Anglicans who were committed to Calvinism by their Articles (see Articles 9, 10, and 17). In those days Calvinism was orthodoxy and Arminianism was heresy; and it was difficult for the ordinary Englishman to dissociate these English Anabaptists, as he called them, from the fanatical Anabaptists of Münster.

At this point something must be said about the vexed question

[1] Whitley, M.G.A., Vol. I, pp. 43 ff.

of the relation between the English General Baptists and the continental Anabaptists. S. Cramer, in his article on the Mennonites in the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, roundly says that "the General Baptists were developed from the Mennonites." Similarly, Lindsay says of Menno Simons that "from his labours have come all the modern Baptist Churches."[1] Whitley takes the opposite view and maintains that the Baptists are "to be sharply distinguished from the continental Anabaptists." "It is inexcusable," he writes, "to-day to confound the continental Anabaptists of the sixteenth century with the English Baptists of the seventeenth."[2] The Roman Catholic scholar, Maximin Piette, says: "It is certainly my opinion that outside of the name Anabaptist . . . there exists no positive proof whatever to establish any direct connection between the two religious movements."[3] Such diversity of opinion calls for a patient investigation of the question of the extent to which the General Baptists assimilated any of the peculiar views of the Mennonites with whom, as we have seen, they had not a few contacts.

It is impossible to believe that John Smyth's contacts with the Mennonites did not inoculate him with some of their ideas. Whitley conceded this when he wrote: "Smyth came to Amsterdam with a very distinct prejudice against all Anabaptists. Yet he was willing to compare notes with them, under their influence to abandon many doctrines in which he had been trained and to study fresh points suggested, till he formally apologized for too hasty a new beginning when he might have joined those to whom he was spiritually akin."[4] There can be little doubt that Smyth derived from the Mennonites his belief that Christians should not take oaths or accept office as magistrates or marry outside the church. He was silent on military service but Article 85 of his long Confession really rules it out for Christians. Whether he derived from the Mennonites his antipredestinarian views, his denial of

[1] *History of the Reformation*, Vol. II, p. 469. [2] H.B.B., p. 18.
[3] *John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism*, pp. 35 ff.
[4] *The Works of John Smyth*, Vol. I, p. cxix. See Vol. II, p. 385 for the passage in which at one time Smyth had classed the Anabaptists with Papists, Familists, Arians, and other heretics.

original sin and his assertion of human freedom, and his rejection of infant-baptism is doubtful. As we have already indicated, there were other sources from which these ideas may have reached him, though surrounding Mennonite influences would confirm him in these opinions.

In England, however, it was not John Smyth but Thomas Helwys who led the first General Baptists; and the evidence is clear that the English country gentleman was not as susceptible as the Cambridge scholar to the influences of a foreign land. Helwys blamed the Mennonites for some of Smyth's changes of opinion and said that he had committed the unpardonable sin in seeking union with them. Helwys soon made it clear that he rejected the Hoffmannite Christology and that he was willing to take oaths and to accept the magistracy, though he completely dissociated it from the religious life of the nation. The five General Baptist Churches which corresponded with the Waterlanders in 1626 took up the same position, being anxious to prove to their many critics that they were not revolutionaries like the fanatical Anabaptists of Münster. Their typically English compromise was rejected by the inflexible Mennonites. Nevertheless they must have felt some spiritual affinity with the Waterlander Church, otherwise they would not have corresponded with it, even though old friends of theirs were included in its membership.

It should, however, be borne in mind that John Smyth was not altogether without influence in General Baptist life in England. His idea that the reading of Scripture was not an integral part of Christian worship lingered on among the General Baptists. Their ablest writer, Thomas Grantham, "in 1678, published a folio ranging over their doctrine, discipline and customs. Sixteen chapters are devoted to the various acts of worship, and there is no mention of reading the Scriptures. This is not because they were disused in other respects. The book opens with an introduction on their divine authority, and closes with an appeal to Scripture, while citations abound . . . yet as to reading publicly on Sunday, there is no word. And the Orthodox Confession of the same date in its Article 37, Of the Sacred Scripture, insists on authority, and on the

need to read in particular places and families; but is silent as to use at public worship. But the Puritan method of running exposition or interpolated comment during public reading survived among Calvinists in England, and was popularized afresh by Spurgeon."[1]

Moreover, Smyth's long confession in one hundred propositions was published in England and to its influence we may probably assign the fact that the question of oaths and military service was always liable to crop up in General Baptist circles. General Baptists went into the Parliamentary Army during the Civil War but misgivings were always liable to arise, as the following entry, dated 1657, from the Register Book of the Speldhurst Church in Kent shows:

> In answer to the enquiries about fighting we say that in some cases it may be lawful, but as the affairs of the nation now stand and is likely to continue till the appearing of the Lord Jesus, we account it exceedingly dangerous . . . and for officers of churches to enlist themselves either as private soldiers or commissioned officers that is altogether unlawful.[2]

As we shall see, at the Restoration in 1660, certain General Baptists went to prison rather than take the oath of allegiance and published works against the taking of oaths.

Nevertheless it must be conceded that this reluctance to take oaths and to fight may be due to other causes than the influence of Smyth. It is possible to assign it to the prevailing biblicism or to the growing influence of the Quakers, who exercised a certain fascination over the General Baptists. On the other hand, that weakness on the question of the Incarnation, which afflicted the General Baptists, and the way in which Matthew Caffyn absorbed certain points of the Hoffmannite Christology, seem to be due to persis-

[1] Whitley, *The Works of John Smyth*, Vol. I, p. lxxxvii f. Whitley adds: "Whatever was valuable in Smyth's pleas on this point is recognized in the liberty enjoyed in non-Episcopal churches, of using any version at public worship, and even of varying it from the margin or from the results of study."

[2] I owe this citation to Dr. Louise F. Brown, *Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men*, p. 9 n. The Speldhurst Church-book is in the British Museum. Whitley (M.G.A., Vol. I, p. lxxvii) calls it the Bradburn and Sevenoaks Book.

tent Mennonite influences. To the same source may be assigned their refusal to allow marriage out of their own communion.

Where so many probabilities must be weighed, it is not wise to be too dogmatic. One point which must never be forgotten is that "there were two kinds of Anabaptists, the sober and the fanatical. Failure to make this distinction has done mischief and caused modern Baptists to deny their connection with the Baptists of the Reformation, whereas they are the lineal descendants of the sober kind and have no reason to be ashamed of their predecessors."[1] This distinction was evidently in the mind of Troeltsch when he suggested[2] that the counterpart in England of the more extreme continental Anabaptists is the confused medley of radical sects, which sprang to life during the Commonwealth and caused Cromwell so much trouble. The General Baptists represented the English version of the sober Mennonite form of the Anabaptist Movement, with characteristic differences due to a different milieu. In England the sober variety appeared before the more extreme, because the common man had to wait a hundred years before he got a real chance of taking his share in the Reformation Movement. The one thing that is perfectly clear is that both the continental Anabaptists and the English General Baptists belonged to the Sect-type of Christianity. If we did not know that the General Baptists and the Mennonites had been brought into actual contact with each other, we might have assumed that the free study of the Bible was a sufficient explanation of the appearance of many of the same ideas in both circles. In every age the Sect-type of Christianity manifests its own well-marked characteristics.

[1] *Schaff-Herzog*, Vol. I, p. 161.

[2] p. 708.

CHAPTER III

The First Particular Baptists

THE origin of the Particular Baptist churches was different from that of the General Baptists. The former had no connexion with the Anabaptists of the continent, but represent the last stage in the evolution of English Separatism as it moved forward to its logical outcome in believer's baptism. They arose as secessions from an Independent Church whose Calvinistic theology they retained. Because they believed in a restricted and, therefore, particular Atonement, confined to the elect alone, they were called "Particular." As they did not arise till the reign of Charles I (1625-1644), a word must be said about the religious policy which he pursued.

Inferior to his father in intellectual capacity, but more sincerely religious, Charles unfortunately allowed himself to be guided in ecclesiastical matters by Archbishop Laud, a pious man with the narrow mind of a martinet. Laud set himself to secure religious uniformity and to suppress everything that savoured of Puritanism. He could not burn men for their opinions, but he was ready to torture their bodies for the good of their souls. He revived the episcopal censorship of the Press, forbade private gentlemen to keep chaplains and made it impossible for corporations to engage Puritans as lecturers. The fear he inspired as the king's confidant enabled him, by one means or another, to deprive or silence Puritan preachers. "Many thousand religious refugees of all classes abandoned good prospects and loved homes in England, to camp out between the shore of a lonely ocean and forests swarming with savage tribes. Laud was the founder of Anglo-Saxon supre-

macy in the new world."[1] Separatists outside the Established Church shared with Puritans who tried to stay within it the fury of Laud's cold and calculating wrath. Separatists were compelled to keep their meetings secret but informers sought out their conventicles and the courts cast them into prison. "The trials for active dissent under Laud are the records of the poor, seized at their worship and confronted with the might of Church and State in the High Commission. Their love of English liberty and their steadfast adherence to the light within them more than atone for the want of that learning which had never been within their reach."[2]

In 1616, there was founded in London a church of Congregationalist Separatists which had often been called the Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey Church after the succession of pastors. All three were clergymen whose Puritanism had taken them over into Separatism. Henry Jacob (1563-1624) who founded the church was an Oxford graduate. In 1624, he went to Virginia where he is said to have died. In the same year John Lathrop (d. 1653), formerly "a Preacher in Kent," succeeded as pastor. When the church came under the iron hand of Laud, Lathrop with thirty of his followers migrated to the New World in 1634. It was not until 1637 that the church obtained another pastor in the able Henry Jessey (1601-1663). Jessey was born at West Rounton, Yorkshire, where his father was rector. He was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge and became vicar of Aughton, Yorkshire, but soon was deprived for nonconformity.

Various aspects of the question of baptism were often discussed in the Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey Church, and, as a result of differences of opinion, there were several friendly dismissals from which the earliest Particular Baptist churches arose. The existing records[3] are tantalizingly meagre and silent on questions which the modern student would like answered. As early as 1630, a certain Mr. Dupper seceded with others who held that baptism by the parish

[1] G. M. Trevelyan, *England under the Stuarts*, p. 173. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

[3] These are contained in the Stinton Repository, printed in *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. I, pp. 203–256, with a valuable introduction and notes by Whitley. Burrage, Vol. II, pp. 292 ff. prints only a selection.

clergy was invalid. There is nothing to show that they rejected infant-baptism, their objection being to any kind of baptism received in the Church of England from which they had separated as being no true Church. In 1633, Samuel Eaton and some others adopted the same opinion and of them it is said that they received "a further baptism." The members of this group were certainly baptized as believers but again it is not made clear whether they rejected infant-baptism or only baptism received in the parish churches. If they did reject infant baptism, theirs was the first Particular Baptist church. In 1638, however, a group of six people comes to light who quite definitely rejected infant-baptism. Of them it is said that they were "convinced that baptism was not for infants but professed believers," and that they were "of the same judgment with Sam Eaton." We naturally expect that the record will go on to say that these six joined Eaton, but instead we are told that they "joined with Mr. Spilsbury." This is the first mention of Spilsbury whose name does not appear among the seceders of 1633. We can only assume that between 1633 and 1638, Spilsbury had become the pastor of an antipedobaptist church, or had risen to leadership in Eaton's congregation. In view of the fragmentary nature of the records, the safest thing to say is that the first Particular Baptist church was founded not earlier than 1633, and not later than 1638. "In 1638 there was either the first Calvinistic Baptist Church, with John Spilsbury as its pastor, containing Samuel Eaton, Mark Lucar, and others, or . . . in the same year there were two Calvinistic Baptist Churches in London, the one under John Spilsbury and the other under Samuel Eaton."[1]

Having settled the question of the proper subjects of baptism, these first Particular Baptist churches had now to answer two further questions: What is the proper mode of baptism? and, who is the proper administrator? A certain Richard Blunt, whose name

[1] Shakespeare, *Baptist and Congregational Pioneers*, p. 183. It may be noted that the Strict and Particular Church now meeting at Church Hill, Walthamstow, claims the 1633 date, and the Devonshire Square Church, now in Stoke Newington, claims that of 1638. See also Whitley, B.L., pp. 103 ff. For the history of the Walthamstow Church see Kevan, *London's Oldest Baptist Church* (London, 1933).

occurs among those who seceded with Eaton in 1633, became convinced that baptism "ought to be by dipping the body into the water, resembling burial and rising again." Finding no one in England who baptized by immersion and understanding Dutch, he went over to Holland in 1641, and received baptism by immersion from the Collegiants, who were an offshoot from the Mennonites. On his return to England, Blunt baptized Mr. Blacklock, the teacher of the church, and these two in 1642 baptized fifty-one others. The new practice soon grew in favour, for the Particular Baptist Confession of Faith of 1644 says:

> The way and manner of the dispensing of this Ordinance the Scripture holds out to be dipping or plunging the whole body under water; it being a sign, must answer the things signified, which are these: first, the washing the whole soul in the blood of Christ; secondly, that interest the Saints have in the death, burial and resurrection; thirdly, together with a confirmation of our faith, that as certainly as the body is buried under water, so certainly shall the bodies of the saints be raised by the power of Christ, in the day of the resurrection, to reign with Christ.

Both the General and the Particular Baptists adopted the new practice, thus making baptism exactly what it was in the New Testament times, both as regards the mode and the recipient.

The action taken by Blunt raised the question whether it was necessary for him to have been immersed by one who had been himself immersed. Possibly the question had been raised before Blunt set off for Holland. Spilsbury and others disliked the idea of succession implicit in Blunt's method of restoring the true New Testament baptism, and they maintained that "baptizedness is not essential to the administrator" of baptism. "They affirmed and practised accordingly, that after a general corruption of baptism, an unbaptized person might warrantably baptize, and so begin a reformation."[1]

In the meantime, the discussion in Jessey's church on the propriety of infant-baptism had been renewed. In 1643, Hanserd Knollys had scruples about baptizing his child and referred the matter to the church "that they might satisfy him, or he rectify

[1] Crosby, Vol. I, p. 103.

them, if amiss herein; which was well accepted." There were several conferences, each "performed with prayer and in much love as Christian meetings." The arguments used on both sides are outlined in the records. Knollys carried with him quite a considerable number, some of whom joined the church of which William Kiffin was the pastor, while others formed themselves into a new church with Knollys as pastor. In 1645, the mother church decided neither to excommunicate them nor to admonish them but "to count them still of our Church; and pray and love them (and to) desire conversing together so far as their principles permit them." In the same year, Jessey himself "was convinced also . . . and was baptized by Mr. Knollys, and then by degrees he baptized many of the Church, when convinced they desired it."

Concerning the pioneer Particular Baptist, John Spilsbury (1593-*c.*1668) not a great deal is known, save that he was a cobbler in Aldersgate. He published a few books, one of which reveals his Calvinism. From its exceedingly lengthy title we extract the following: "wherein it is proved that Christ hath not presented to his Father's justice a satisfaction for the sins of all men; but only for the sins of them that do or shall believe in him, which are his elect only." Spilsbury was called the "great Patriarch of the Anabaptist Confession." His importance is revealed by the fact that Henry Cromwell tried to get him over to Ireland to quiet the more revolutionary Baptists there. But Thurloe, writing to Henry Cromwell in 1656, said that he could not go as he had just accepted a call from "a very great people." This refers to Spilsbury leaving the original Particular Baptist church to go to Wapping.

Another early Particular Baptist of a different social type was William Kiffin. Born in London in 1616, at an early age he lost both his parents who died of the plague. As a boy he was apprenticed to the Leveller, John Lilburne, then engaged in the brewing trade.[1] "A very mean calling," Kiffin says in the autobiography he left in manuscript. As a youth he attended the ministry of

[1] This tradition is now questioned. There are grounds for thinking that Kiffin and Lilburne were fellow-apprentices

various Independent preachers and joined one of their churches. About 1641, he became a Baptist, joining Spilsbury's church, and was soon after thrown into prison. In 1644, he appears with Thomas Patient as the leader of the new Devonshire Square Church whose pastor he remained for sixty years. After a serious illness he went to Holland and started in the woollen trade. He soon became one of the wealthiest merchants in London and was able to wield a great influence among and on behalf of his fellow-Baptists, as we shall see in our next two chapters.

Hanserd Knollys (1599-1691) was the son of a Lincolnshire rector and was educated at St. Catherine's College, Cambridge. He received Anglican Orders and became incumbent of Humberstone in 1631. He developed Puritan ideas and soon resigned his living and became a Separatist preacher in London. Life was so difficult under the régime of Laud that Knollys emigrated to New England in 1638. Three years later he returned to London and became a member of Jessey's church, separating from him to found a church of his own, as we have seen. He supported himself by a school which he opened and was initiated, probably by Kiffin, into the trade with Holland. His business activities seem to have been considerable and he was helped by a succession of assistants in the pastoral care of the church which he served till his death in his ninety-third year. He published Hebrew, Greek, and Latin grammars and also an exposition of the Book of Revelation. His interest in the Apocalypse drew him, as we shall see, into the Fifth Monarchy Movement, with the result that his church was frequently embroiled with the State from 1657 onward.

By 1640, however, the nation had become weary of the absolutism in State and Church of Charles and his archbishop. The House of Commons reasserted its power. In November, Strafford, chief adviser to Charles, was arrested and sent to the Tower together with Laud. On December 11th, Alderman Pennington, attended by "a world of honest citizens in their best apparel," presented to Parliament a petition, signed with fifteen thousand names, for the abolition of Episcopacy "with all its roots and branches." Many Englishmen felt convinced that Laud was

grooming the Church of England for eventual reconciliation with Rome. Actually the Laudians, with their doctrine of the divine right of kings and bishops, were only a minority in the nation; but their alliance with the Crown had given them power, which they used so tyrannically that they provoked Parliament to a revolution which swept away both the king and the bishops, and paved the way for the common man to declare his mind on religious questions.

CHAPTER IV

Twenty Years of Growth, 1640-1660

THE persecution of Puritanism by Laud had consequences of which he had never dreamed. It forged Puritanism into State-Presbyterianism. His Arminianism had hardened its Calvinism and his theory of the divine right of bishops had hardened its Presbyterianism. Thus, soon after the Civil War began, the Presbyterians demanded that the State Church should be reformed according to the Genevan model and all dissent therefrom suppressed. Their majority in Parliament enabled them to subject the Church of England to the most complete and drastic revolution it has ever undergone. Episcopacy was abolished and Presbyterianism was recognized as the form of church polity by law established. The use of the Prayer Book was prohibited and a Directory for Worship substituted for it. The Ecclesiastical Courts were abolished and also the Thirty-nine Articles. The Universities were re-organized and became no longer a preserve for Episcopalians. The bishops were deprived of their seats in the House of Lords; their lands, and those of the Deans and Chapters of the cathedrals, were sold and the proceeds used to augment the incomes of the poorer paid livings. Clergy who were incompetent or morally scandalous, or suspected of being Royalists or Laudians, were ejected. The majority were allowed to remain undisturbed in their benefices, provided they did not use the Prayer Book and were not implicated in royalist plots. The new system was thoroughly Erastian for Parliament was in control of all ecclesiastical affairs; but, for a time, Presbyterian Puritanism had captured the machinery of the State Church.

This period of Presbyterian dominance lasted only from 1640 to 1648, when the Army occupied London, and Colonel Pride excluded some hundred members from Parliament and carried off nearly fifty more to prison. The Army was wrathful. It had done its work and saved the liberties of England and now a Presbyterian Parliament proposed to disband it unpaid and to suppress its religious opinions. Independents and Baptists formed the backbone of the New Model Army. They were not impressed men but volunteers and they were determined to secure the religious liberty for which they had fought. Having thrown off the tyranny of Laud, they were not prepared to submit to another. With incredible folly the Presbyterians, who had used them, proposed to suppress them now they were no longer needed to stem the tide of battle. They were proposing to replace one type of religious uniformity by another just as rigorous and infallible. They, too, aimed at establishing a national church which permitted no dissent either in doctrine or discipline. They were just as intolerant as the Laudians and just as ready to suppress all Separatists. With the voluntary or Sect-type of Christianity they had no sympathy whatever. But the majority of the New Model Army stood for this type of Christianity. They claimed that the Church best thrived in an atmosphere of tolerance and spiritual liberty. In the Army was to be found a new phenomenon: the earnest discussion of the issue of toleration by classes of men hitherto inarticulate. The Army demanded liberty of conscience and refused to enter the new State Church which Parliament had established; and the Army and Cromwell were now masters of England.

When Cromwell ruled, as Lord Protector, he was faced with an extremely difficult and complicated situation. The Church was in confusion. The machinery of the new Presbyterian system, never popular, had been established only in a few counties. Cromwell tried to evolve some order out of chaos. Himself an Independent only in the broad sense of that term, he decided not to abolish but to maintain the Established Church, and, therefore, he left tithes and patronage untouched. He

appointed a body of Triers, whose duty was to see that the patron did not present an unfit person for institution to the benefice. The business of these Triers was to ascertain whether the person nominated by the patron was intellectually, morally and spiritually competent. Once instituted, the new incumbent might organize his congregation on Presbyterian or Independent lines, if he could persuade them to follow him. Voluntaries, who objected to the State Church, were at liberty to form separate congregations at their own discretion, provided "they abuse not their liberty to the civil injury of others, and to the actual disturbance of the public peace." Cromwell was not concerned with dogmatic niceties. It meant little or nothing to him whether a man had received episcopal or presbyteral ordination, or none at all. In the ministry of the State Church he did not scruple to include Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, while leaving untouched non-royalist Anglicans, provided they were qualified for their office and did not use the Prayer Book. His real concern was that the Church should have a godly and competent ministry. He had no desire to force all men into one Church, but at the same time he had no intention of allowing any religious group to impose its will upon other Christians. "He had come to believe that religious toleration was the most precious fruit of civil war and its retention was to be his constant preoccupation."[1] "This religious settlement," says John Buchan, "was the most tolerant yet seen in England . . . an honourable effort to raise the spiritual level of the people."[2]

Naturally, the new system presented many anomalies. It was tolerant to the verge of looseness; and, for different reasons, it offended all the contending parties. In point of fact, it shut its eyes to the real problem of what the National Church should be, and ignored rather than solved it. The confusion of the period had been rendered worse by the rise of the Sects. During the Civil War and the Commonwealth, there was a remarkable outbreak of intense religious zeal. The English kings had insisted upon the religious life of the nation running in certain well-worn channels.

[1] Jordan, Vol. III, p. 146.

[2] *Oliver Cromwell*, p. 443.

When their restraining hand was removed the tides of religious life rose high and the common man at last got his chance of expressing his views on religious and social questions, and was no longer content to have his views prescribed for him by the State. New groups appeared, such as the Seekers, the Ranters, the Familists, the Levellers, the Diggers, the Quakers, and the Fifth Monarchy men. They exploded the old Puritanism into many fragments. All belonged to the Sect-type of Christianity and some manifested its extravagances. Men and women in large numbers had broken free from their religious moorings and were sailing troubled seas. Modern research enables us to see in most of these groups, in spite of certain excesses, men and women of honest heart, filled with unsatisfied longings for a vital religious experience. The older Puritans were shocked by the outbreak of the Sects, especially as some of them mingled advanced political views with their religious convictions. Presbyterians vied with Anglicans in their denunciation of these Sectaries.

With this background in our minds, we are now in a position to ask how the Baptists fared during the period of civil and religious confusion. The outbreak of the Civil War gave them, as well as the Presbyterians, an opportunity for the free expression of their opinions, for the ecclesiastical courts, which Laud had used to repress all Puritans and Separatists, were abolished. Moreover, after 1640, Laud was unable to continue the censorship he had exercised over the Press. There issued in consequence a spate of pamphlets discussing the validity of infant-baptism. Englishmen were now free to speak their minds and many waverers made an avowal of their real opinions.

Another feature of the time was the public disputation which sometimes drew great crowds. Debates between Baptists and Quakers were frequent, but almost as frequent were debates with various opponents on the proper subjects and mode of baptism. In this way not a few were converted to Baptist opinions and among them, as we shall see, were men of standing. Perhaps the best known of these debates was that held in Southwark in

1642 between William Kiffin and the Rev. Daniel Featley, D.D., who later published his account of it which he entitled *The Dippers Dipt, or, the Anabaptists duck'd and plunged over Head and Eares.*

The debate was begun by a Scotchman who said:

"We hold that the baptism of infants cannot be proved lawfully by the testimony of Scripture or by apostolical tradition; if you therefore can prove the same either way, we shall willingly submit unto you."

Proud of his established reputation as a controversialist, Featley replied in a superior fashion:

"... If you will dispute in Divinity, you must be able to produce the Scriptures in the original languages.... Secondly, if you will dispute by reason, you must conclude syllogistically in mood and figure, which I take to be out of your element ... Before I answer yours, I will propound a question or two to you concerning the Blessed Trinity."

To this the Scotchman replied:

"This, Mr. Doctor, is *nihil ad Rhombum.* We would know of you whether the baptism of children can be proved lawful."

Noteworthy for our present purpose is Featley's frank admission, in his Epistle Dedicatory to the Most Noble Lords with the Honourable Knights, Citizens and Burgesses now Assembled in Parliament, that the Baptists

... preach, and print, and practise their heretical impieties openly; they hold their conventicles weekly in our chief cities, and suburbs thereof... they flock in great multitudes to their Jordans, and both sexes enter into the river and are dipt.... And as they defile our rivers with their impure washings, and our pulpits with their false prophecies and fanatical enthusiasms, so the presses sweat and groan under the load of their blasphemies.

How live an issue the question of infant-baptism had become may be seen from the fact that Baptist principles were accepted by some who never threw themselves into the life of the Baptist churches. Among these John Milton stands out. Writing of his *De Doctrina Christiana,* Masson says:

It is here that we learn definitely that Milton agreed with the Baptists in rejecting Infant Baptism and in holding immersion in water to be the proper

form of the rite and that we have also . . . his preference for Congregationalism or Independency over Prelacy or Presbyterianism as a form of church-organization, his antipathy to a State Church or professional and paid clergy, and his detestation of the interference of the State or Civil Magistrate in any way in matters of religious belief.[1]

There is no evidence that Milton was ever baptized as a believer or sought membership in a Baptist church. Probably his Arian views of the Person of Christ prevented this. His third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, during her widowhood joined the Nantwich Church, remaining in communion with it till her death.

As far as is known, Colonel and Mrs. John Hutchinson never joined a Baptist Church, but in her *Life* of her husband Lucy Hutchinson has left on record a clear account of their rejection of infant-baptism. At the time her husband was Governor of Nottingham Castle. The Presbyterian chaplains forced him to break up a prayer-meeting of Baptist soldiers in the cannonier's room in the Castle. In this room were found some notes concerning pedobaptism, which, she says,

were brought into the Governor's lodgings, and his wife then having more leisure to read than he, having perused them and compared them with the Scriptures, found not what to say against the truths they asserted concerning the misapplication of that ordinance to infants. . . . But in this year, expecting to become a mother, she communicated her doubts to her husband, and desired him to endeavour her satisfaction; which while he did, he himself became as unsatisfied, or rather satisfied against it. First, therefore, he diligently searched the Scriptures alone, and could find in them no ground at all for that practice: then he bought and read all the eminent treatises on both sides, which at that time came thick from the presses, and was still more dissatisfied of the Pedobaptists. After the confinement of his wife, that he might if possible give the religious party no offence, he invited all the ministers to dinner, and propounded his doubts and the ground thereof to them. None of them could defend their practice with any satisfactory reason but the tradition of the Church from the primitive times, and their main buckler of federal holiness, which Tombs and Denne has so excellently overthrown . . . whereupon the infant was not baptized.[2]

[1] *Life of Milton in Connexion with the History of his Time*, Vol. VI, p. 834. The manuscript of the *De Doctrina Christiana* was not discovered till 1823. The Latin text and an English translation were first published in 1825.

[2] *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson written by his Widow Lucy* (edited by Harold Child, London, 1904), pp. 289 ff.

The "Tombs" mentioned by Mrs. Hutchinson was an interesting person whose remarkable career illustrates the vagaries of ecclesiastical life in this period. A Worcestershire man and a graduate of Magdalen Hall, Oxford, John Tombes, B.D. (1603–1676) became, in 1630, Vicar of Leominster where he turned the table north and south, instead of altar-wise, and began to disuse the surplice and the sign of the cross in baptism. In 1642, the Royalists drove him out of his living and, in the same year, he adopted definitely antipedobaptist views as the result of a public disputation at Bristol. Thereafter he held a variety of non-parochial appointments in which he could avoid baptizing infants. For a short time he was Master of the Temple but Presbyterian hatred of "Anabaptists" drove him out. Next we find him curate of Bewdley where he had his famous disputation on infant-baptism with Richard Baxter, who described him as "the chief of the Anabaptists, the greatest and most learned writer against infant-baptism." When the Presbyterian dominance ended, he was back again in Leominster in 1649 and kept the living until he was ejected in 1662. He was also one of Cromwell's Triers. His learning and dialectical skill made him a redoubtable debater. In the West of England six or seven Baptist churches sprang up in places where he had held disputations. He fostered these churches, which were of the open-communion type, and trained three men for their ministry. The looseness of Cromwell's arrangements for the State Church enabled the Vicar of Leominster to do this. After the Ejection of 1662, the Bishop of Hereford wrote: "The only considerable Non Subscriber is the proud Anabaptist Toms, than whom I never knew a prouder, the very child of old Marcion." The last years of his life he spent in Salisbury where, after so stormy a career, he may be forgiven for marrying a wealthy widow. Under the Indulgence of 1672, when his house was licensed as a meeting-place, he described himself as a Presbyterian. There is no evidence that he ever had any contacts with the Baptist church in Salisbury. He was buried at St. Edmund's Church, Salisbury, whose Rector wrote:

When I attended him in his last sickness, he desired me to testify that though he was so unhappy as to differ from the Church of England on the point of Infant Baptism, yet durst he not separate from her Communion on that account any farther than by going out of the Church whilst that office was performing and returning in again when it was ended.

Tombes' writings in defence of the lawfulness of oaths gained him a pension of £50 per annum from Clarendon, who was an old acquaintance at Magdalen Hall. He has often been claimed as a Baptist. Like Milton and the Hutchinsons, he was an anti-pedobaptist but not a Baptist in the true sense of that term.

According to Whitley,[1] about a score of clergymen left the Establishment and became ardent propagandists of Baptist principles. Often, like Tombes, they were induced to do so as the result of public disputations. Some, unlike Tombes, associated themselves wholeheartedly with Baptist church-life. Mention may here be made of some of them.

Francis Cornwell was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and accepted the living at Marden in Kent. His Puritan sympathies attracted the attention of Archbishop Laud and, for a time, he was in prison. He afterwards accepted Baptist views, and, in 1644, was baptized by William Jeffery, a General Baptist Messenger. Thereafter he gathered his own congregation at Marden which later was in membership with the General Baptist Assembly. He was an advocate of religious liberty and argued that "whoever erects a repressive system lays 'a foundation of a new rent in the ages and generations to come,' and rears a cross upon which may be stretched his own posterity."[2]

Christopher Blackwood (1606–1668), a Cambridge graduate, was Rector of Staplehurst in Kent. Francis Cornwell, in 1644, preached a sermon before the clergy at Cranbrook in which he maintained that the baptism of infants was "an antichristian innovation." Greatly offended, the clergy debated the matter and agreed to re-examine the point and to communicate their findings to each other at their next meeting. The more Blackwood studied the matter, the more did he become convinced that

[1] H.B.B., p. 70.

[2] Jordan, Vol. III, p. 536.

Cornwell was right. He brought forward his arguments at the next meeting and, getting no sufficient answer, published his findings in his *The Storming of Antichrist, in his two last and strongest Garrisons. Of Compulsion of Conscience, and Infants Baptisme, etc.* (1644).[1] He then appears to have founded the Spilshill Church. From 1653 to 1659, he was in Ireland as preacher in the Dublin Cathedral. According to Harrison, he was the "oracle of the Anabaptists in Ireland." A Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, published an answer to Blackwood's Baptist views.

Henry Denne (d. 1661 ?) was curate of Pyrton, Hertfordshire, at the time of his conversion to Baptist views. He was appointed to preach the visitation sermon at Baldock. In it he attacked the clergy for their pride, covetousness, pluralities and non-residence. The stir caused by his outspokenness led Denne to examine more fully the points then disputed in advanced Puritan circles. "He found," says Crosby,[2] "that the practice of baptizing children was without any foundation in Scripture, or the writings of the Church for the first two ages after Christ." Accordingly, about 1643, he was baptized by the General Baptist pastor, Thomas Lamb, and joined his church. He was then thrown into prison for a short time for disseminating Baptist views. In 1645, we find him holding the living of Elsly (Eltisley) in Cambridgeshire, but he soon quitted it to go into the Army in which he became a cornet of horse. He was one of the Army group which insisted that the king should be brought to justice. He headed the mutiny at Salisbury in 1649 and was captured with other mutineers at Burford, whither Fairfax had pursued them. A court-martial was held and two cornets (of whom Denne was one) and two corporals were condemned to death. At the last moment, Denne was pardoned but the other three were shot in the churchyard.[3] Thereafter Denne devoted himself to evangelistic work in the Eastern Counties and became a Messenger

[1] For an exposition of Blackwood's views on religious liberty, see Jordan, Vol. III, pp. 462 ff.
[2] Vol. I, p. 302.
[3] See Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, Vol. I, pp. 53 ff.

among the General Baptists.[1] His Arminian views are revealed in the treatise he wrote in 1646, *The drag-net of the kingdom of heaven, or Christ's drawing all men.* In his gossipy way, Edwards devotes several pages of his *Gangraena* to Henry Denne, calling him "an antinomian and desperate Arminian," who was "re-baptized by a mechanick." "His usual theme that he is upon is Christ's dying for all, for Judas as well as Peter. He often preaches this doctrine. This is the everlasting Gospel, that Jesus Christ has died for all men, Turks, Pagans; and men are only damned for not believing in Christ, and for nothing else."[2]

So long as the period of Presbyterian dominance lasted, Baptists were under sharp attack from the Presbyterian divines. No Baptists were included in the Westminster Assembly of Divines, which was constituted in 1643 to advise Parliament on the best method of reforming the State Church. The Assembly was predominantly Presbyterian, though it included a small knot of Independents who defended their own polity. The views of Presbyterians like Robert Baillie and Samuel Rutherford were those that prevailed in the Assembly. Robert Baillie (who was made a member of the Assembly shortly after being appointed to the Chair of Divinity at Glasgow and made Principal of the same University at the Restoration) regarded the Independents and Baptists as mortal enemies of the State Church. The freedom they claimed would lead only to the spread of the most deadly heresies. The devout and learned Samuel Rutherford "denied absolutely the philosophical and moral principles underlying religious toleration and gave to the outworn theory of the exclusive Church a stubbornly magnificent vindication."[3] According to Rutherford "there is but one true Church and all who are outside it are heretics who must be destroyed."[4] The saintly Richard Baxter went so far as to charge Baptists with baptizing their converts naked, and argued that such a practice was a breach of the Seventh Commandment. "If Mr. Tombes,"

[1] For Denne's work for the General Baptists, see Taylor, Vol. I, pp. 101–107, 145–152, 163–6. [2] cf. Rufus M. Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 422.
[3] Jordan, Vol. III, p. 292 [4] *Ibid.*, p. 296.

he said, "could baptize naked all the maids in Bewdley, and think it no immodesty, he hath lost his common ingenuity and modesty with the truth."

Slanders such as these compelled the Particular Baptists of seven London churches to publish in 1644 their first Confession of Faith.[1] In their preamble they say that they do so to disclaim as "notoriously untrue" such calumnies as "holding Free-will, Falling away from grace, denying Original sin, disclaiming of Magistracy, denying to assist them either in persons or purse in any of their lawful Commands, doing acts unseemly in the dispensing the Ordinance of Baptism, not to be named among Christians." At the same time they state vigorously their claim to liberty of conscience. The Confession appears to have created some surprise by its orthodoxy and moderation. Even Daniel Featley could find only six out of its fifty-three articles to which he took exception. The Confession was revised in 1646 and the new edition was dedicated to Parliament. A third edition was called for in 1651 and a fourth in 1652. The churches in the West of England, led by Thomas Collier, followed with their Confession in 1656.[2] This activity on the part of the Particular Baptists evidently stimulated the General Baptists. In 1651 thirty of their congregations in the Midlands published a Confession, signed by sixty-one persons, "to undeceive those that are misinformed."[3]

In May 1648, Parliament passed a Blasphemy Ordinance[4] which imposed the death penalty on those who propagated such heresies as atheism and Socinianism, and lifelong imprisonment on those who preached and taught free-will and the vanity of infant-baptism, etc., unless they found two sufficient sureties that they would not publish or maintain their error any more. "The ordinance was rendered unenforceable, however, by the fact that it sought to extirpate elements in English religious

[1] Printed in McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, pp. 171 ff.

[2] Printed in McGlothlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 202 ff., who suggests that there was "some jealousy or fear of the London churches on the part of those in the country."

[3] Printed in McGlothlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 95 ff.

[4] Printed by Crosby, Vol. I, pp. 199 ff.

society quite as strong in their totality as Presbyterianism in whose interests the Bill had been passed. The Blasphemy Ordinance was a belated and formal gesture by Parliament to a sorely beset Presbyterianism already sinking into the status of a sectarian minority."[1] Before the year was out, Parliament was purged and the Assembly of Divines died with the Parliament that gave it birth. Both were defeated by the growing power of the Baptists and Independents in the Army.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Baptists had ranged themselves on the side of the Parliament and flocked into its Army, where promotion was rapid. As Sir Charles H. Firth has pointed out,[2] men who joined as troopers sometimes became colonels and even generals. Baptist churches composed of quite humble people had representatives in the nation's high places. "The use of the term 'Independent' to designate the religious texture of the Army as distinct from the 'Presbyterian' Parliament (1640–1648) has obscured the fact that the New Model Army was largely recruited and officered from Baptists."[3] The prayer-meeting rather than the ale-house was their favourite relaxation, and they carried on an active propaganda which was strikingly successful. Mention may be made of some Baptists who held commissions in the Army.

William Allen,[4] a Warwickshire man, who had been a felt-maker in Southwark, joined as a trooper but, by 1651, was Adjutant-General in Ireland, after having been prominent in bringing Charles I to trial. Allen and his brother-in-law, Major John Vernon, later Quartermaster-General in Ireland, founded the Baptist church at Loughwood in Dalwood on the Devon and Somerset border. In 1644, Vernon wrote a drill-book for the Parliamentary Cavalry which he called: *The Young Horseman; or the honest plain-dealing Cavalier; wherein is plainly demonstrated . . . the exercise and discipline of the horse.*

[1] Jordan, Vol. III, pp. 114 ff. [2] *Cromwell's Army*, pp. 40 ff.
[3] H.W. Robinson, *Life and Faith of the Baptists*, p. 153.
[4] For Allen, see H. W. Robinson, *ibid.*, pp. 28 ff., *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. IV, pp. 129 ff., and A. S. P. Woodhouse, *Puritanism and Liberty*.

In later life Vernon was a member of a church which hired the Glass House on Broad Street, London, and fitted it with two tiers of galleries—the first known instance of a meeting-house.[1] Richard Barrowe was also a colonel in Ireland. He wrote a brief answer to Praisegod Barbon's attempt to prove that the baptism of infants was "warrantable and agreeable to the word of God."[2]

Colonel Henry Danvers came of a wealthy Staffordshire family and was for a time Governor of Stafford. His work on Baptism called forth many answers including one from Richard Baxter. He also advocated universal toleration, even of Papists. Captain Edmund Chillenden, the General Baptist who became a Fifth Monarchy man, illustrates the confusion of the times in more ways than one. In 1647, he issued *Preaching without Ordination; or a Treatise proving the lawfulness of all Persons to preach and set forth the Gospell, though no minister, nor any other officer in the Church of God.* In 1653, the Council of State granted the use of the Stone Chapel at the east side of the north end of St. Paul's for the use of Chillenden's church. Here he was assailed by a mob of apprentices and order was restored only by the appearance of the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs.[3]

Colonel Richard Lawrence was Marshal-General of Horse in the New Model Army and Surveyor-General of Stores in Ireland, where he took up lands for arrears of pay. He felt strongly that the Separatists in the Army had gained nothing if the Presbyterians succeeded in placing themselves in the still warm seats of the bishops. In 1647, he published a pamphlet entitled *The antichristian Presbyter, or, Antichrist transformed; assuming the new shape of a reformed presbyter as his last disguise to deceive the nations.* Robert Lilburne was one of the regicides and for a time Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Scotland. He defeated the Earl of Derby at Wigan in 1651 and was Member of Parliament for the East Riding of Yorkshire in 1656. John Lilburne, the Leveller, was his brother. Major-General Robert Overton,

[1] Whitley, B.L., p. 106.

[2] Barbon's book shows that it is a mistake to claim him as a Baptist, as has often been done.

[3] Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, Vol. II, p. 305.

a barrister of Gray's Inn, served in many campaigns and was Governor of Pontefract, Hull and York, fostering the Baptist cause in every garrison.

William Packer, who early in his career was turned out of the Army as an Anabaptist by Major-General Crawford but reinstated by Cromwell in an oft-quoted letter, was a colonel at Dunbar. Colonel John Rede was Governor of Poole in 1649 and commanded a garrison in Scotland. In 1655, he founded the Baptist Church at Porton. Nathaniel Rich was the colonel of a regiment of horse in the New Model Army and Member of Parliament for Cirencester. Colonel Sir Jerome Sankey was wounded at Nantwich in 1645 and served in Ireland under Cromwell who knighted him. His sermons in manuscript are in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin.

Captain John Spencer started life as a coachman and was one of the Army officers who pressed for the trial of Charles I. He was a pioneer lay preacher. In 1641, he published *A Short Treatise concerning the lawfulness of every man's exercising his gift as God shall call him thereunto.* This produced a reply which throws some light on the times. *New Preachers, Greene the Feltmaker, Spencer the Horse-rubber, Quartermine the Brewers Clarke, with some few others, that are mighty sticklers in this new kind of talking trade, which many ignorant Coxcombes call Preaching.* In 1653, however, the Council of State ordered that certain persons, among whom were Major William Packer and Captain John Spencer, might preach in any unoccupied pulpit.[1]

John Wigan was a Colonel of the Guards. He founded the first Baptist Church in Manchester and was concerned with the beginnings of the Hill Cliffe Church, near Warrington.

Other high placed officers in the Army have been claimed as Baptists, notably Edmund Ludlow who was Lieutenant-General in Ireland; Charles Fleetwood who was Commander-in-Chief and Lord-Deputy in Ireland; Colonel Matthew Alured who was cashiered by Cromwell. It is true that these men were said

[1] Haller (*op. cit.*, 263 ff.) has a good account of the spate of base-born, "mechanic" preachers.

to hold "anabaptist" opinions but their names appear on no Baptist Church roll; and it has to be remembered that the term Anabaptist was used in those times generically to denote anyone holding advanced religious or political opinions, pretty much as in recent times such a person was called a "Bolshie."

Baptists also held high office in the Fleet during this period. Dr. Louise F. Brown says that they were so numerous that the General Baptist Assembly held in London in 1654 considered the advisability of sending Baptist chaplains to them.[1] The best known among them was Vice-Admiral Sir John Lawson, who co-operated with Monk in the Restoration and was knighted in 1660. Gardiner says that he was probably the author of the seamen's petition of 1654. "A Baptist by creed, he sympathised mainly with the Levellers."[2] Lawson died of a wound received in action against the Dutch in 1665.

Richard Deane, who showed great energy as a Commissioner for the trial of Charles I and fought at Worcester as a Major-General, was appointed in 1649 one of three Generals-at-Sea. He was killed by one of the first shots in the action off the Gabbard Shoal in 1653 and buried in Westminster Abbey. John Disbrowe (Desborough), who was associated with the Fenstanton Church, served as a Major-General at Worcester. He married Cromwell's sister and was a member of the Council of State of the Protectorate, Privy Councillor, Commissioner for the Treasury, Member of Parliament for Cambridgeshire and Somerset, Major-General of the West, and also a General-at-Sea.

Baptists were also found in other high positions in the State. Henry Lawrence, educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, was successively Commissioner of Plantations, Commissioner for Ireland, and from 1654 to 1659, Lord President of the Council of State of the Protectorate, of which the blind Milton was Latin secretary. In Parliament he represented Hertfordshire and Carnarvonshire. He wrote more than one book on Baptism

[1] *Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men*, p. 11 n. She cites Thurloe, *State Papers*, Vol. II, p. 582. There is no reference to the proposal in the Minutes of the Assembly.

[2] Gardiner, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 216.

and also a curious work, *An History of Angells being a Theological Treatise on our Communion and Warre with Them.*

Samuel Moyer was said to have the greatest financial reputation of his time. From 1649 to 1654 he was Head of the Customs. In 1653, he was appointed Councillor of State and, in 1659, made by Act of Parliament one of three Judges of Probate.

Samuel Richardson was "a substantial London tradesman and was certainly one of the shrewdest and most influential of the Baptist leaders in the capital. He appears to have been a member of the original Particular Baptist congregation. Richardson signed the three Baptist Confessions of 1643, 1644, and 1646, and was regarded both by his own Church and the Cromwellian Government as one of the most responsible leaders of his sect."[1] "Richardson followed political and ecclesiastical developments with great acumen during an extremely critical decade, and devoted himself to the enlargement of religious liberty as the chief fruit of the revolution which England was then undergoing."[2] On the subject of eternal punishment he was ahead of his time. In 1658, he published a book entitled *Of the torments of hell. The foundation and pillars thereof discovered, searched, shaken and removed. With many infallible proofs that there is not to be a punishment after this life for any to endure that shall never end.* It was several times reprinted and called forth several replies, one of which was called, *Everlasting fire no fancy.*

The barrister, William Steele (Caius College, Cambridge, and Gray's Inn) was Recorder of London, Chief Baron of the Exchequer and Lord Chancellor of Ireland, where he quarrelled with Henry Cromwell. Evidently Steele had a lawyer's pedantry for Henry Cromwell complained that "at his first coming he . . . read lectures to me of affairs and maxims of state, taught me how to carry myself at the council, gave me rules how things should be managed at the board, how abroad; and lest I should

[1] Jordan, Vol. III, p. 515.
[2] Jordan, *loc. cit.*, Jordan deals fully with Richardson's thought on religious toleration.

forget my lesson, gave me three or four sheets in writing, of those rules he thought of most importance."[1]

Edward Cresset, a member of the Glaziers' Hall Church and one of the signatories of the Confession of 1644, held many administrative posts during the Protectorate. "Such were his gifts of administration that he was made first Registrar, then Master of Charterhouse; the Pedobaptist governors esteeming him so highly that they waived the previous rules as to eligible candidates. Not only did he manage its affairs well for ten years, but he was employed by the State in the sale of forests, to manage the mint, to investigate discoveries, to look after fraudulent debtors."[2]

Colonel John Fiennes, son of the first Viscount Saye and Sele, was Commissioner of the Great Seal in the restored Upper House, which included other Baptists such as Henry Lawrence and Colonels John Jones, Philip Jones and John Disbrowe. A few years before this, Baptists were well represented in the short-lived Nominated (Barebones) Parliament, on whose deliberations they exerted a strong influence. Colonel Henry Danvers and Major Thomas Sanders consistently supported religious liberty in its debates.[3]

It is interesting to observe the reactions of some of these men to the political and religious problems of their time. The establishment of the Protectorate called forth protests from some Baptists, especially in Ireland. "Some of them felt that the very term Protector was an impiety if applied to any but the Deity. The ceremonial of the new court, too, offended the Baptist ideas of simplicity."[4] Most Baptists in the Army were pronounced republicans and objected to what they called "government by a single person." They had been accustomed in their church-life to the settlement of all questions by the method of free discussion. Strong democrats, they voiced their objections in no uncertain

[1] Cited by Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 169. [2] Whitley, H.B.B., p. 71.
[3] cf. Jordan, Vol. III, pp. 145 ff.
[4] Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 56. Dr. Brown cites the following from *The Broadmead Records* (p. 43), "Oliver Cromwell called Lord Protector when as God alone was the protector of his people, but we sinned."

terms when Cromwell toyed with the idea of kingship, as indeed did ministers like Jessey, Knollys, and Spilsbury. Some of his old comrades-at-arms disliked even his acceptance of the title of Highness and told him so. On the other hand, Baptists like Kiffin,[1] Spilsbury, Richardson, Steele, Henry Lawrence, and Thomas Cooper did their best to serve the government and to maintain peace. To them it seemed that Cromwell's government was the best possible in the circumstances and could be trusted in time to remove such abuses as tithes. In the meantime, they were content to take advantage of the religious toleration granted them as a sufficient measure for the relief of tender consciences. Of Samuel Richardson, Jordan well says, "He shared the normal Baptist aversion to the formality of the Cromwellian settlement of religion and viewed with disapproval the conservative political tendencies which led to the establishment of the Protectorate. But as a prudent and responsible leader Richardson was gravely alarmed by the violence of the attacks which were launched against the Protectorate by Fifth Monarchy and other radical writers."[2] Thomas Cooper, a member of the Devonshire Square Church, was sent to Ireland and put in command of the forces in Ulster, where Baptist officers were voicing their grievances.

Cleavage of opinion also manifested itself among Baptists with regard to Cromwell's scheme for the State Church. Six Baptists, Colonel William Packer, Colonel William Goff, John Tombes, Henry Jessey, Daniel Dike (Dyke) and Edward Cresset, were included in 1654 among the thirty-eight central Triers, and some Baptists served on the sub-commissions appointed in certain country districts.[3] A number of Baptists accepted benefices or other state-paid appointments in the Established Church. Tombes, as we have seen, returned to his cure at Leominster. Jessey accepted a morning Lectureship at St. George's, Southwark, but continued his ministrations to the gathered church later in the day. Dyke became Rector of Much Hadham,

[1] During the Commonwealth Period, Kiffin was parliamentary assessor of taxes for Middlesex and sat in Parliament for the same area from 1656–1658.

[2] Jordan, Vol. III, p. 515.

[3] See Whitley, H.B.B., pp. 82 ff. for the Commission for Wales.

Hertfordshire. How many others accepted appointments may best be considered in our next chapter, when we deal with the Ejections of 1662. The majority of Baptists looked askance on the idea of a State Church as inconsistent with their fundamental principle that a true Church is a voluntary association of believers, each congregation being autonomous under the Headship of Christ. The maintenance of a church establishment by means of tithes was also deemed objectionable. Men like Henry Lawrence, Samuel Richardson, and a prosperous merchant like William Kiffin realized, doubtless, that vested interests and established financial institutions could not be swept away with a wave of the hand. Richardson was a spirited defender of Cromwell's political and religious policy. "Why dost thou find fault," he asked, "so long as you and others have liberty to preach freely?" According to him, a true Church disdained the privileges and trappings of a State Church and demanded nothing more than the liberty which Cromwell had accorded it.

Most Baptist churches, however, put considerable pressure upon Baptist ministers to dissuade them from accepting any such public post as that which Jessey was occupying at Southwark. In 1655, Jessey had visited the Baptist churches at Cirencester, Bristol, Wells, Somerton, Chard, Taunton, Honiton, Exeter, Dartmouth, Plymouth, Lyme, Weymouth, and Dorchester. The leaders of the Western Association were disturbed and when they met at Wells in the next year, they published a circular letter on the subject. It says:

> We answer that a Preacher of the Gospel ought not to accept of the place of Minister to a Parish, or Lecturer, or Chaplain, not to take a set maintenance of the world for preaching the Word. (Among the many reasons they gave for their attitude is that) It stops the mouth of a Minister from bearing an open and full testimony against the practice of the Parish Ministry, who, Balaam-like, run after the reward; and seeing this is the way of Anti-Christ's Ministers, it becometh not Christ's thus to follow the reward, whither that goeth, thither to go.[1]

[1] The letter is printed in *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. I, pp. 65–68.

We turn now to consider how far Baptists were affected by the rise of the sects which had taken the opportunity to reveal their radicalism in both religion and politics. Naturally a few, who had been Baptists, went over to the Levellers, who stood for full equality for all before the law. There is apparently no evidence that any went over to the Diggers, who claimed that it was a Christian duty to put the common land and crown properties under spade and ploughshare. More went over to the Quakers, between whom and the Baptists there were many public disputations and frequent controversies. The Baptist emphasis on "positive ordinances" provoked Quaker opposition. On the other hand, the Quaker message attracted many Baptists who were in the habit of stressing the inner guidance of the Spirit and were almost Seekers in the technical sense of that term. In his admirable *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, Braithwaite has shown that it was a "shattered" Baptist Society at Mansfield which, in 1648, "first supplied George Fox with congenial religious fellowship, and, under his leadership, developed into the earliest Quaker congregation."[1] The Broadmead Church, Bristol, in one year lost about a fourth of its membership. "Whole Baptist churches changed their views, others were terribly rent, especially in the General Wing. In nearly all minute books dating from this period are signs of the trouble caused in every part of the country . . . Young Bunyan was involved in frequent wrangles . . . Feeling ran high for years, and it was not till the Hanoverian period that Quakers and General Baptists could be induced to stop open opposition."[2] The most notable Baptist convert to Quakerism was Samuel Fisher, an Oxford graduate who held a Lectureship at Lydd until he became a Baptist in 1649, after which he went about disputing on baptism till he became a Quaker in 1654. Baptist publishers often re-issued his *Baby-baptism meere babism*. The student may find an account of the fine work he did at home and abroad for Quakerism in Braithwaite's learned volume.

The radical sect which most affected the Baptist churches

[1] *op. cit.* p. 12. cf. pp. 43 ff.

[2] Whitley, H.B.B., pp. 84 ff.

was the Fifth Monarchy Movement, for any understanding of which it is necessary to remember the extraordinary features of the times. A revolution was taking place. What was more natural than that religious men should try to find the key to the future in the apocalyptic books of the Bible? The notion became widespread that the nation would soon see the fulfilment of the prophecies in the Book of Daniel about a coming Fifth Kingdom. This chiliastic idea was accepted by practically every religious body. There emerged, however, a definite Fifth Monarchy Party, whose leader was Colonel Thomas Harrison, who later became a Major-General and, in 1650, Commander-in-Chief in England. It proclaimed that the four world-empires of the Book of Daniel covered the whole intervening period down to the Protectorate of Cromwell, with the breakdown of which the fifth world-empire of the full dominion of Christ might be expected. With the Advent of Christ and the establishment of the Fifth Monarchy would come a true Kingdom of Saints, without priest or sacrament, law or oath, king or government. The immediate duty of the saints was to prepare for this Fifth Kingdom by bringing the existing government into line with the rule of Christ, by allowing none but the godly to sit in the seats of the mighty. On the basis of these views the Fifth Monarchy men formed a few churches, though they were careful to say that association with them did not preclude membership in any other Christian church.

Naturally the Fifth Monarchy men bitterly resented Cromwell's acceptance of the Protectorate as an apostasy. One of their preachers, the Anglican Vicar, Christopher Feake, declared that Cromwell was the little horn of Daniel's prophecy, who was to make war on the saints, and whom the saints would finally destroy. At the same gathering another preacher (this time a Baptist, Vavasour Powell) cried, "Let us go home and pray, and say, 'Lord, wilt Thou have Oliver Cromwell or Jesus Christ to reign over us?'" Harrison forfeited his commission rather than consent to act under the Protectorate, and other Fifth Monarchy officers followed his lead. Relations

between the Movement and Cromwell worsened. In the interests of civil order, the Protector had a number of Fifth Monarchy men thrown into prison, Harrison himself being one of them.

As we have indicated, the Fifth Monarchy Movement drew its recruits from all the churches, except the Presbyterians; but the Baptist churches suffered most. "Whole Baptist churches were transformed, many were leavened."[1] Sometimes the movement was the other way as, for instance, when Harrison, John Carew, and Hugh Courtney were baptized as believers in 1658 without surrendering their Fifth Monarchy views. It would serve no useful purpose to list the names of Baptists who were drawn into the Fifth Monarchy Movement; but mention may be made of General William Allen, Colonel Henry Danvers, Captains John Simpson and William Aspinwall. Vavasour Powell, who evangelized in Wales, was a fervid champion. The congregations led by men like Hanserd Knollys and Henry Jessey ranged themselves wholly or in part on the side of the Movement.

The majority of Baptists, however, held aloof. Men like Kiffin, Richardson, Steele, Henry Lawrence, John Spilsbury, and Thomas Cooper exerted themselves to serve Cromwell and to maintain peace. In 1654, the Baptist churches at Hexham, Derby, and Horton (near Bradford, Yorkshire) sent in an address of confidence in the Protectorate.[2] "We profess," they say, "our subjection to your Highness and most honourable Council, as the happy powers ordained of God." In the same year came an address "of the baptized churches consisting of officers, soldiers and others, walking in gospel order at Leith, Edinburgh, and St. Johnstown," also supporting the Protectorate. Also, in 1654, the General Assembly of General Baptists published a manifesto in which they said:

> Nor do they know any ground for the saints, as such, to expect that the Rule and Government of the World should be put into their hands, until that day in which the Lord Jesus shall visibly descend from Heaven in power and great glory . . . but till then they rather expect it as their portion, patiently

[1] Whitley, H.B.B., p. 85.
[2] Printed by the Hanserd Knollys Society in *Confessions of Faith, etc.*, pp. 331 ff.

to suffer from the world, as the Scriptures direct them and as the Saints usually have done, than anywise to attain the Rule and Government thereof.[1]

What progress had Baptists made by the end of the tumultuous years between 1640 and 1660? In 1644, there appear to have been seven congregations in London and forty-seven in the rest of England. Writing in 1911, Whitley calculated that by 1660 the General Baptists had one hundred and fifteen churches and the Particular Baptists one hundred and thirty-one.[2] In 1938, Jordan, who had worked over the data afresh, wrote: "We have counted 297 Baptist churches, of the two persuasions, founded in England and Wales prior to 1660. . . . The Baptists were . . . weak in the six northern counties, where only nine may be counted. The strength of the communion was centred in the Midlands, in London, and its environs, and in the southern counties. . . Well over half the Baptist churches founded before 1660 were concentrated in Middlesex, Kent, Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire, Somersetshire, Gloucestershire, Lincolnshire, and Wales."[3]

Whitley has pointed out that the mobility of the Army contributed to this rapid growth. "Colonels Rede and Deane traversed South Wales to stamp out a rising in Pembroke, and Baptist churches sprang up along their route. A Lancashire rising in May was quelled by Robert Lilburne, and within a month John Wigan had planted a Baptist church in Manchester. When the Scotch Army evaded Harrison and came to grief at Preston, Brigadier-General Deane did fine service, while Rede helped capture the last infantry at Warrington; here again a Baptist church appears within three years. In November the cavalry besieged Pontefract, and soon after its fall a Baptist church was found there."[4] The same effects may be observed from the presence of Baptists in the Army in Ireland.[5]

Baptists were frequently ridiculed for having low-born and

[1] The manifesto is printed in Whitley, M.G.A., Vol. I, pp. 2 ff.

[2] See *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. II, pp. 236 ff., where the churches are listed according to counties.

[3] Jordan, Vol. III, p. 457.

[4] H.B.B., pp. 78 ff.

[5] See Whitley, H.B.B., p. 80; Ivimey, Vol. I, pp. 239 ff.; Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 136 ff.

illiterate preachers. An attack on them published in 1645 runs thus:

> Q. Who are your preachers and what are they?
>
> A. There are divers: viz., Mr. Patience, an honest Glover, Mr. Griffin, a reverend Taylor, Mr. Knowles, a learned Scholler, Mr. Spilsby, a renowned cobler, Mr. Barber, a Button maker, and divers others.[1]

Commenting on this type of attack, Dr. Rufus M. Jones has finely said:[2]

> The charge was partly true; there were among them preachers who had been tailors, leather-sellers, soap-boilers, brewers, weavers, and tinkers, but the important point is that these preachers carried conviction and wrought righteousness and constructed spiritual churches to the glory of God. They did in their generation, what herdsmen and vine-dressers did in the early days of Hebrew prophecy, what tax-collectors and fishermen did in the primitive days of the Church; and it was vastly to the credit of these primitive Baptists that they rediscovered how to bring the gifts of laymen and unschooled members into play for spiritual ends.

Edward Barber was a London merchant-tailor in Threadneedle Street who was in prison for eleven months in 1641 for denying the validity of infant-baptism and for an attack on tithes.[3] The same year he published *A small Treatise of Baptisme, or Dipping.* A staunch General Baptist, in 1644, he, together with another Arminian Baptist (Thomas Lamb), held a famous disputation with Kiffin and Patient in Kent, in which county he did a fine evangelistic work. Barber was a leader among the General Baptists and one of the most prominent of their ministers; though probably never the pastor of one of their churches. He was an ardent advocate of the practice of the laying on of hands on all who had been baptized, as well as of religious toleration. "Barber discovered in the doctrine of general redemption a conception of faith which made all religious persecution abhorrent and impious."[4]

[1] I owe this citation to Dr. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 5, note 7.

[2] *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 418. See pp. 419 ff. of this work for women preachers.

[3] Crosby, Vol. I, p. 219. Crosby's statement that Barber was a minister of the Established Church (repeated in the D.N.B.) has no evidence to support it.

[4] Jordan, Vol. III, p. 470. Jordan deals fully with Barber's thought on religious toleration and remarks that in it "may be detected an attitude of mind which embraced religious toleration as an obvious spiritual necessity" (p. 471).

Thomas Lamb (*d.* 1673) first appears as ministering to a Separatist congregation in his native city of Colchester. For this he was arrested and brought to London where he appeared before the Star Chamber and was committed to prison. His wife solicited Archbishop Laud to have pity on her and her eight children, but the prelate ordered his servants "to take away that troublesome woman." Next we hear of him as earning his living as a soap-boiler in London and as the pastor of a General Baptist church. He "was in almost all the gaols in and about London, as he always used to return to his work of preaching as soon as he got free from confinement."[1] He used to say that "a man was not fit to preach, who would not preach for God's sake, though he was sure to die for it as soon as he had finished."[2] His evangelistic zeal took him down to Gloucestershire "and soon vicar after vicar was complaining of his work and of his dipping his converts in the Severn."[3]

It is not easy to sum up the gains and losses of these twenty years of rapid expansion. There was some crudity, as well as a tendency to split churches on minor issues. But such features are inevitable in every revolutionary period, when the explosive force of conviction obtains full play. There was little of that opportunism which would rather hold people together than reach sound conclusions. One observes also a certain lack of leadership, though the Particular Baptists were perhaps better led than their General brethren. They had started later but, by 1660, had gone ahead and taken a lead which they were never to lose. Thereafter they were the more important group. "Baptist thought during this period remained static despite the remarkable evangelical successes of the sect. . . . The energy and interests of the English Baptists were completely expended in evangelical effort under a lay leadership which was neither competent nor disposed to contribute notably to the maturing of the philosophy of the sect."[4] On the other hand, two things should be borne in mind. In the first place, Jordan himself admits that "perhaps no other religious group in

[1] Ivimey, Vol. I, p. 171. [2] Taylor, Vol. I., p. 99.
[3] Whitley, H.B.B., p. 68. Lamb was one of the signatories of the General Baptist Manifesto of 1654. [4] Jordan, Vol. III, p. 458.

England during the period under survey made so important a contribution to the development of the theory of religious toleration as did the Baptists."[1] Secondly, Baptists had planted themselves so firmly and widely that the storm of persecution which blew up again with the Restoration was powerless to uproot them.

[1] *op. cit., loc. cit.*

CHAPTER V

Renewed Persecution

CROMWELL was succeeded as Protector by his son, Richard, who had none of his father's qualities and was glad to retire into private life in May 1659. Power fell into the hands of the soldiers but they could not agree among themselves. To prevent anarchy, General Monk entered London in March 1660 and declared for a "free parliament," which called Charles II back again. Most Baptists were as ready as other people to accept the restoration of the monarchy as the only alternative to chaos. Unfortunately, however, the old slanders against them were being revived. They were still called Anabaptists, for nicknames have a long life in England. In an anarchic time it was easy for many to believe that the English Anabaptists were outrageous revolutionaries like the fanatics of Münster. It was to meet the dangers inherent in such a situation that, in March 1660, the General Baptists held their Assembly in London and put out *A Brief Confession or Declaration of Faith*[1] in order "to inform all men (in these days of scandal and reproach) of an innocent belief and practice, for which we are not only resolved to suffer persecution, to the loss of our goods, but also life itself, rather than to decline the same." In their last article they affirm their belief that the Magistracy is of divine appointment, but they deny to it any jurisdiction in religious matters. They repudiate utterly the truth of "all those wicked and devilish reports" that some of them "had

[1] This became the standard Confession of the General Baptists. The text may be found in McGlothlin's *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, pp. 111 ff., and Whitley, M.G.A., Vol. I, pp. 10 ff.

lately gotten knives, hooked knives and the like, and a great store of arms . . . intending to cut the throats of such as were contrary minded to us in matters of religion." The next month Charles issued from Breda his Declaration promising full pardon to all, save such as Parliament would except, a free Parliament and liberty of conscience in matters not affecting the peace of the kingdom. On the 25th of May, he stepped ashore at Dover, and declared that "it was the thing that he loved above all things in the world" when the Mayor put an English Bible into his hands. Some Baptists who had held high positions during the Interregnum thought it best to flee abroad. William Steele went to Holland, but was able to return after a time unmolested. Samuel Moyer was imprisoned till 1667 when he was released on taking the required oaths. Colonel John Rede, the founder of the Porton Church, was in prison from 1661 to 1665. Colonel William Packer was transported. Colonel Robert Lilburne's name had been included in the proclamations of the Council of State requiring the judges of Charles I and others to surrender. His estates were confiscated and he was condemned to lifelong imprisonment, dying in 1665. Some Baptists migrated to the Palatinate and others to Rhode Island. Many must have lost their employment, being paid off out of the Army and dismissed from the Civil Service. The General Baptist printer and publisher, Francis Smith, was imprisoned again and again and ruined. Henry Hills, who had printed so many Particular Baptist publications, lost his post as official printer to the Commonwealth. He became a Roman Catholic in 1682 and regained his official appointment.[1] Kiffin stayed in London but was more than once arrested, once on the charge of plotting against the king's life.

The oath of allegiance required by Charles evidently caused some cleavage of opinion in General Baptist circles. The Brief Confession (1660) was silent on oaths, but, earlier in the year, "a small society of baptized believers, undergoing the name of free-

[1] See D.N.B. for his piracies which led to an Act in the reign of Queen Anne directing that fine paper copies of all publications should be sent to the public libraries.

willers, about the city of London," put out a declaration[1] signed by Henry Adis, Richard Pilgrim and William Cox, "in behalf of themselves and those that walk with them." They repudiate the current slanders of "murdering and destroying," affirm their obedience to magistrates "in all civil things that are agreeable to the mind of God;" but they decline absolutely to take oaths, saying, "we look upon it to be our duty to keep ourselves from oaths, engagements, and covenants, either for or against this or that person, government, or persons whatsoever: *for because of swearing the land mourneth*, Jerem. 23. 10." The declaration appeared as a single sheet but when, in the same year, Adis reprinted it as a kind of appendix to his *A Fannatick's Mite cast into the Kings Treasury: being a Sermon printed to the King, Because not Preach'd before the King* he was able to add another signature. In this sermon Adis used great plainness of speech.

> Marvel not, O King, at my single hearted conclusion, in that I said, I shall neither swear nor fight for Thee, neither conclude me peremptorily peevish, nor factiously rebellious, because I am so plain: But by the way know, that in conclusion, Thou wilt find him to be Thy truest friend, that dealeth plainliest with Thee, for one dram of down right honesty, is of more true worth than a whole pound of fawning flattery; for mine own part, although I am by trade an upholdster, yet know, O King, I come not to sow pillows under Thy elbows, I fear that Thou hast artificial workmen at that work already, and too many too, for thy future good; but what I have received of the Lord, in the singleness of my heart, and in plainness of speech, I declare unto Thee, take it as Thou wilt, and do with me for it as Thou pleasest.

Before the end of 1660, Adis paid the penalty for his obstinacy, for we find him addressing a letter from the Gatehouse prison of Westminster to "all his brethren in the three nations at liberty; and also in the several gaols and dungeons therein, that are under all the principles of the doctrines of Christ, Heb. 6. 1, 2."[2] In the

[1] Printed in Crosby, Vol. II, Appendix, pp. 91 ff.

[2] Little is known of Adis, but the reference to Hebrews vi. 1 f. makes it clear that he was a General Baptist. Moreover, on the title pages of five of his books that I have examined, he described himself as "a baptized believer, undergoing the name of Free-Willer and also most ignominiously by the tongue of infamy called a fanatic or a mad man." He states that he is living "in Princes Street, near Covent Garden."

next year he issued from the same prison an answer, written in a passion of indignation, to Tombes and the General Baptists, Jeremiah Ives and Henry Denne, who had written defending the antiquity and lawfulness of oaths. Adis and his little group were by no means the only Baptists to refuse the oath of allegiance. In Bristol, they were reported in 1660 as both numerous and defiant. In 1663, the Domestic State Papers give a list of 214 Anabaptists and Quakers in Newgate for being at conventicles or refusing the oath of allegiance.[1] The authorities had fallen back upon the old Conventicle Act of Elizabeth, and could not realize that it was the oath itself, and not the object of the oath, which was the stumbling block to many Baptists and all Quakers. They felt that both parties must have revolution in mind; and for this attitude there was real excuse with regard to some Baptists.

There were a few Baptists who were far from adopting the attitude of passive resistance. Their idea was to foment a rebellion. They had lived through one revolution and thought to promote yet another. Thomas Tillam, a member of Hanserd Knollys' church and the founder of the church at Hexham, was thrown into prison in 1660. He was a firebrand and, with some other Baptists, was known to be implicated in a scheme whereby a hundred had gone to the Palatinate, and to be in communication with leading regicides who had fled abroad. "In 1663 there were ominous comings and goings among the discontented nonconformists and old Cromwellian officers. Some conspirators were arrested in the county of Durham in the spring. In October two hundred men collected under arms at Farnley Wood near Leeds. They collected only to scatter again. There were arrests all over the country. Twenty-one plotters were executed in Yorkshire."[2] The Baptist, Paul Hobson, was implicated in the Farnley Wood Plot. When captured, he was induced to turn king's evidence. Hobson, who was one of the signatories to the Particular Baptist Confession of 1644, had served in the Parliamentary Army, debated on baptism, published devotional sermons, and had been

[1] Whitley, *Bibliography*, Vol. I, p. 87 and p. 79 for Bristol.
[2] G. N. Clark, *The Later Stuarts*, p. 21.

arrested for lay-preaching during the time of Presbyterian dominance. He also opposed Cromwell's acceptance of the Protectorate and, in 1660, had been concerned in the migration of a hundred families to the Palatinate. From 1654 to 1660, he had been Chaplain of Eton. His colourful career closed soon after 1665, when two women of the Devonshire Square Church were disciplined for "wanton conduct" with him. Another signatory of the Confession of 1644 who was implicated in the northern plot, was Thomas Gower, the founder of the Newcastle Church. These men were only a handful but their activities should be recorded, if only to point the contrast between them and their Baptist brethren who emphatically disavowed them.

What had really alarmed public opinion was the insurrection of Venner. One of the first acts of the Convention Parliament had been the execution of a dozen regicides. Thomas Harrison was the first to be executed. In his diary Pepys wrote:

> I went out to Charing Cross to see Major-General Harrison hanged, drawn and quartered; which was done there: he looked as cheerful as any man could do in that condition. He was presently cut down, and his head and heart shown to the people.

Exasperated by the death of their leader, the Fifth Monarchy men rose under Venner, the cooper (who was not a Baptist), in January 1661. The trained bands were unable to deal with them so the regulars were called out. "After a fierce encounter the maddest of the soldiers were shot down or disarmed by the children of this world in an ale-house near Cripplegate."[1] Thus ended the last politically important wave of chiliasm and the last attempt of Christian social reformers to set up the Kingdom of God in this world by the sword.

Venner's rebellion alarmed sober Baptists who saw that it offered the authorities yet another pretext for suppressing conventicles. The situation was critical. To meet it, Baptists of all shades of opinion united to publish *The Humble Apology of some commonly called Anabaptists*[2] in which they disclaimed any con-

[1] G. M. Trevelyan, *England under the Stuarts*, p. 336.
[2] Printed by the Hanserd Knollys Society in *Confessions of Faith*, pp. 343 ff.

nexion with "the late wicked and most horrid treasonable insurrection and rebellion acted in the City of London." They drew a distinction between the fanatical Anabaptists of Münster and the quiet Anabaptists of Holland, and said that the rebels were all except one "assertors of infant baptism, and never had Communion with us in our assemblies." This was the first document in which, as far as is known, General and Particular Baptists had co-operated. It was signed by men like Kiffin and Spilsbury for the Particulars and by Henry Denne and Thomas Lamb for the Generals. Henry Hills, a Particular Baptist, printed it and Francis Smith, a General Baptist, sold it.

In 1661, soon after Venner's rising, Charles put out a proclamation prohibiting all unlawful and seditious meetings and conventicles under pretence of religious worship. In November of the same year, an example was made of John James, a Seventh-Day General Baptist, who had openly preached sedition at Bullstake Alley, Whitechapel. After his execution, "his heart was taken out and burnt, his quarters fixed on the gates of the city, and his head set up in Whitechapel, on a pole, opposite the alley in which his meeting-house stood."[1] Warning was given that John Belcher, a bricklayer and Fifth Monarchy Baptist, was preaching in Coleman Street, Limehouse, and was likely to prove another Venner.[2] Venner's rebellion had obviously alarmed the authorities who knew that not a few Baptists were Fifth Monarchists. Seventh-Day Baptists held their services for divine worship on Saturday. They maintained that the seventh day of the week was sanctified by the Creator for all mankind (Genesis ii, 2 f.); that the Fourth Commandment was as immutable as the others; and that there was nothing in the New Testament to warrant the substitution of the first day of the week for the seventh as the Sabbath. Their views arose, no doubt, out of the biblicism of the age. They seem to have been connected in some way with the Fifth Monarchists, though what the precise connexion was has never been made clear. Some Seventh-Day Baptists were

[1] Taylor, Vol. I, p. 259.
[2] Whitley, *Bibliography*, Vol. I, p. 84.

Calvinistic or Particular, others were Arminian or General. Not all who held Seventh-Day views were Baptists.

When the Cavalier Parliament met in 1661, it had to deal not only with the conventiclers, but with the problem of the State Church. The Episcopalians recaptured its machinery and endowments and set themselves to coerce where they could not convince. In 1661, the abortive Savoy Conference was held to see if room could be found for the Presbyterians in the Established Church. Presbyterian hopes were dashed to the ground by Episcopalian insistence on the re-ordination of all clergy who had received Presbyterian Orders. The Episcopalians then pressed home their victory in the succession of Acts which form the Clarendon Code (1661–1665). The Corporation Act (1661) laid it down that members of municipal bodies were to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, on pain of removal, and that future aspirants to these offices were also to have taken, during the twelve months before their election, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the Church of England. The Act of Uniformity (1662) required from all beneficed clergymen subscription to a declaration that they gave "unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by" the Book of Common Prayer. All who refused to subscribe by St. Bartholomew's Day were to be deprived of their livings and were liable to three months' imprisonment in the event of their preaching again after that date. All professors, heads and fellows of colleges in the Universities, all schoolmasters and tutors in private families were required to sign a declaration abhorring all claim to offer any armed resistance to the king or his representatives, and to promise to conform to the liturgy of the Church of England. The Conventicle Act (1664) punished all persons of sixteen years and upwards attending a Nonconformist service, at which more than four persons joined the family, with fines or imprisonment for the first and second offences, and with transportation for seven years or a fine of £100 for all subsequent offences. The Five Mile Act (1665) applied to "parsons, vicars,

curates, lecturers, and other persons in Holy Orders" and prohibited them from coming within five miles of any town in which they had ministered, unless they took an oath promising they would "not at any time endeavour any alteration of government, either in Church or State."

The Clarendon Code bore hard upon Baptists, though it was directed primarily not against them but against the Presbyterians. The Corporation Act deprived Baptists and all other Dissenters of a share in municipal life. "John Bunyan gives a vivid picture of how this worked out locally; the town of Mansoul had the old mayor and the old recorder ejected, with new officers installed. At not many places were Baptists directly affected, though we know that Coventry was specially reported as having a Baptist butcher, Thomas Hobson, who must be displaced from the mayoralty. The records of that city disclose amusing proceedings with relation to him. The rack was only being set up, not worked as yet."[1]

The aim of the Act of Uniformity of 1662 was to drive out of the State Church all with Puritan leanings. Between 1,800 and 2,000 incumbents and others gave up their appointments and went out into poverty and privation. The large majority were Presbyterians. Round about four hundred were Congregationalists.[2] Many fewer Baptists had entered Cromwell's State Church. Whitley has examined the careers of ninety Baptists of whom it has been asserted that they held posts in the Established Church while being Baptists, and has come to the conclusion that, at the most, twenty-six of them were ejected in 1662 and the majority of them came from the Welsh dioceses.[3] The ejection of so many Presbyterians had one curious effect upon Baptists and other Dissenters. It made Dissent for the first time "considerable and respectable," when "the Presbyterian Church was hurled down into the common clay of other sects, and compounded there-

[1] Whitley, H.B.B., p. 112 and *Bibliography*, Vol. I, p. 84.

[2] At the Restoration 390 Congregationalist ministers held benefices in the State Church (*Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, Vol. VI, pp. 25 ff.). See also Vol. XIV, pp. 156 ff., and Matthews, *Calamy Revised*.

[3] *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. I, pp. 24 ff. cf. H.B.B., p. 160. It is not possible to check Whitley's figures with Matthews' *Calamy Revised*, as it does not deal with the four Welsh dioceses.

with under the heel of the Cavaliers."[1] It enlarged the numbers of those whom the Episcopalians set themselves to suppress. A few Presbyterians went over to the Independents but many, compelled now to accept the voluntary principle, organized their own congregations. "In other words, Presbyterians began to keep conventicles, and at once broke the old Conventicle Act on a scale hitherto unexampled. In this way they rendered a great service to the Baptists, who might otherwise have been crushed easily. From this moment the storm of persecution was directed to the new, wealthy, influential class which for more than a century had been at home in the Church of England as by law established."[2] Nevertheless, the Domestic State Papers show that at the end of 1662, there were 289 Baptists in Newgate Prison and 18 in the Tower,[3] and that Henry Jessey was being detained in spite of orders for his release.

Henry Jessey was the most notable Baptist ejected in 1662. He went out of his Lectureship at St. George's, Southwark. He died the next year and between four and five thousand people attended his funeral. Crosby[4] tells us that in addition to his morning lecture at St. George's and his afternoon sermon to his "gathered" church, Jessey preached once a week to the maimed soldiers at Ely House in the Savoy. He constantly carried about him the Hebrew and Greek Testaments, calling one his "sword and dagger" and the other his "shield and buckler." He attempted a more correct translation of the Bible and was greatly interested in the conversion of the Jews, for the relief of whose sufferings he raised large sums of money. Many people resorted to him, "some to converse with him as a friend, some to consult him as a casuist, and others to get relief from him as a common benefactor to the distressed." A bachelor who hated idle talk and fruitless visits, Jessey placed over his study door some Latin lines which have been rendered thus:

> Whatever friend comes hither,
> Dispatch in brief, or go,
> Or help me busied too.

[1] G. M. Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 342.
[2] Whitley, H.B.B., pp. 113 ff.
[3] Whitley, *Bibliography*, Vol. I, p. 85.
[4] Vol. I, pp. 312 ff.

Other Baptists ejected were Richard Adams, vicar of Humberstone, near Leicester, who started preaching at his own house in Mountsorrel, not far away. In 1689, he was appointed elder of the General Baptist Church in Bermondsey, which he failed to win over to Particular Baptist views. Next he became co-pastor with Kiffin of the Devonshire Square Church, which in 1712 pensioned him on twelve pounds a year. Daniel Dike, who was ejected from the rectory of Much Hadham, Hertfordshire, also became one of Kiffin's co-pastors. John Donne, rector of Pertenhall, Bedfordshire, and John Gibbs, vicar of Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, were, with John Bunyan, pastors of a group of Baptist congregations in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Like Bunyan, Gibbs was an open-membership Baptist. He was one of the founders of the Olney Church, whose trust-deeds of 1694 describe the congregation as "Independent or Protestant Dissenters" and direct that no one can preach, pray or perform any religious worship or service in the assemblies, or on the premises, unless he agrees with John Gibbs.[1]

The Conventicle Act of 1664 simply revived the Elizabethan Conventicle Act, but mitigated its penalties, omitting the death penalty. Under the old Act, John Bunyan had been in prison at Bedford since 1660. In 1663, a group of General Baptists in Buckinghamshire had been arrested and twelve of them condemned to death, under the Elizabethan Act, for being at a religious meeting. Their friends brought the matter to the knowledge of Kiffin who interceded for them with the king. Charles immediately issued a pardon.[2] He was surprised to learn that the sentence was legal, and he could hardly offend a man who could let him have £10,000. The story goes that Charles once asked Kiffin to lend him £40,000. The Baptist merchant replied that he could not possibly lend His Majesty so large a sum,

[1] The Olney Church preserves a copy of Richard Carpenter's account of his public disputation with Gibbs on infant-baptism entitled *The Anabaptist washt and washt, and shrunk in the washing* (1653). The disputation was held at Newport Pagnell. Carpenter was an Independent. Gibbs was appointed Vicar of Newport Pagnell in 1652.

[2] See Crosby, Vol. II, pp. 181 ff. and Whitley, *Bibliography*, Vol. I, p. 87. Whitley points out that Crosby was six years out in the date.

but he would be pleased if he would accept £10,000 as a gift. When telling the story, Kiffin used to say that he had thereby saved £30,000 by his liberality. The General Baptist, Captain Edward Morecock (1626–1693) of Chatham, took his own line. The State Papers show him writing to the Navy Commissioners in 1668 and saying that he would do no more work for the public until the Act against Conventicles was stopped.[1] Morecock had been the captain of a man-of-war during the Protectorate. Later we find him selling timber to Pepys and, after the Dutch War, raising the ships which had been sunk in the Thames and Medway to prevent the approach of the enemy to London and Chatham. Adam Taylor says that he "commenced preaching before he resigned his commission . . . and frequently ascended the pulpit at Chatham in his scarlet roquelaure."[2]

The severity of the persecution under the Conventicle Act of 1664 depended upon the temper of the local magistrates and the activity of informers who throve unpleasantly well, putting into their own pockets a part of the fine. Joseph Davis, the General Seventh-Day Baptist linen merchant, left on record his own experiences. He wrote:

> About the time the king entered London, I was illegally seized by the county-troops, and carried a prisoner seven miles from my habitation and calling, to Burford, and there detained two days, being oftentimes tempted to drink the King's health; but out of conscience I as often refused so vain an action, though it began to be very much the custom of the time.
>
> My second imprisonment was after Venner's unlawful insurrection; when the militia of the county Horse and Foot, . . . came on the seventh day in the evening to our town, and Mr. Hoard, one of the captains of the county-troops, came to my shop, asking my name and demanding arms, rudely made me prisoner for nothing; . . . my house was rifled by his soldiers, who took away my goods feloniously . . . when Lord Lieutenant Faulkland came. . . he tendered me the oath of allegiance, which I did not refuse, and then demanding the good behaviour, the breach of which they interpreted would be going to any separate assembly, for the sake of religious worship. This arbitrary demand I refused indeed and was . . . on Monday sent to Oxford Castle, with others of my honest neighbours, until the Lent Assizes, when no matter being alleged against us, we were privately released by the Lord Lieutenant.

[1] Whitley, *Bibliography*, Vol. I, p. 93. [2] Vol. I, p. 271.

In January the year following, one Worge, a constable, as he said, had verbal order from the Lord Faulkland, to take me up again, and carry me to Oxford, which he did accordingly; and with such a guard, as if I had been a criminal, though without any warrant of commitment, and delivered me a prisoner, to the gaoler, where I was detained till the Lent Assizes, and then obtained to be called.

The judge would know what I was committed for; and after I had opened the case to him he replied, "I must not interfere with the Lord Lieutenant's power"; and so I was remanded back to prison until the Summer Assizes . . . but then, having a more just judge . . . he released me; the Lord Faulkland, my adversary, having before this, been summoned by death, to the great tribunal.

The next spring I was committed to prison by Sir Thomas Pennison, Deputy Lieutenant . . . where I remained about two years, and appearing in Court, where he was present, I told him before the Judge of the Sessions, that the English laws were tender of men's liberty, and did not countenance the keeping them always, no, for so long in prison, although legal occasion had been given for the "Behaviour" to be required; whereas I had broken no law, nor was charged with the breach of any by my commitment . . . and they, whispering together, maliciously tendered the Oath of Allegiance. I answered them, I had taken it already . . . But however in a few sessions they praemunired me, which in severity is the loss of all my goods and chattels, and imprisonment during the King's pleasure. A frightful sentence, had not my God restrained the execution.

But now the proud waves went over my soul; for my dear wife, who, having had the encumbrance of my shop, and three children lying upon her hands . . . fell into a deep consumption, of which she languished about two years, which much heightened my afflictions. During which time her affections carried her sometimes beyond her ability, to come and see me, when she was so weak I was forced to carry her upstairs in my arms. But when she was near her end, by means of the aforesaid Sir Thomas Pennison's Lady's midwife, he ordered me so much liberty in the year 1665, that I had the opportunity to see her last end, and dispose of my house and shop-goods, and put my children out to nurse. After which I returned to prison again as ordered. . . .

When I had been . . . prisoner ten years, or near upon . . . the king sent and loosed my bonds. . . . After that I came for London, and in some little time, sent for my children up, but could not soon fall into an employment, though I sought very carefully after it; at length, by the direction of God's providence, I set up the trade of a linen-draper, beginning first in a garret, and afterwards, I made use of a middle room, till at length the providence of God directing, I took a shop in the Little Minories . . . Though I was settled in very good business, it was not eight years e'er a general storm arose, that

affected all the Dissenters in most parts of this nation, who were faithful and courageous in their holy profession; the enemy turning the laws made against the Papists upon the Dissenters, of which I had my share, and was fined £20 per month, being taken at three meetings.

The forward persecutors affrighting the Peace-Officers with threats, to cause them to make distress upon my goods, they came upon the Sabbath evening to break open my shop, and had almost effected it, but left off; whether it were that my family's being a-singing while they were doing it, or by reason of some other powerful conviction, or that Mr. Tomlinson nailing up the windows, almost broken open, with some long nails, prevented them, I do not determine; however they gave over for that time. But being informed by a neighbour that they intended to come the next week with the trained bands, to make a spoil and prey of what I had, I suddenly removed my goods from my house and shop, into the city, and made sale of them; and I and my wife went and lived privately some years, until "God stayed His rough winds in the day of His east winds," and King James ascended the throne, declaring for liberty of conscience.

After which I had a mind to leave my lodgings, and take a house and shop, which I was directed to by divine providence, where I have now lived near twenty years in a prosperous condition.[1]

As the terms of the Five Mile Act show, it affected only ex-clergymen who refused to take certain oaths. It had, therefore, little effect on Baptists. There is no ground for the belief that some of their chapels were built in out-of-the-way places to evade the provisions of the Act. Meeting-houses were everywhere illegal till 1689.

In 1667, Clarendon fell from power, having incurred the hostility of both king and Parliament. His fall left the king free to intrigue for the toleration of both Dissenters and Catholics. His plan for the toleration of Dissent was nothing more than the bye-play of his plot for the restoration of Catholicism on which he had set his heart. "The intrigue provoked a fierce and effectual demonstration. In 1670 the members of the Cavalier Parliament met in a rage. It was not to weaken the policy of the Clarendon

[1] *The Last Legacy of Mr. Joseph Davis, Senr., passim.* No copy of the first edition (1707) is known. I have quoted from the unique copy of the 1720 reprint in Rawdon College Library. No interested reader will expect me to apologize for so lengthy a quotation from such a human document. The curious may follow the persecutions of a church during the same period in *The Broadmead Records.*

Code that they had overthrown Clarendon. They renewed the expiring Conventicle Act by large majorities."[1] It gave justices of the peace, or those authorized by them, the power to break open the doors of suspected conventicles and to arrest those assembled and to disperse conventiclers with companies of either horse or foot. The mayor of Dover dismantled and locked up the house in which Baptists met, but they defied the Act, broke open their meeting-house and used it.[2] The Broadmead Church, Bristol, had its doors nailed up and locks put upon them. It met in the lanes and highways for several months.[3]

In 1672, however, Charles felt able to try again to implement his policy. By virtue of his "supreme power in ecclesiastical matters," he issued a Declaration of Indulgence suspending all penal laws on matters ecclesiastical against Dissenters and Romanists. It allowed the former to worship in public and the latter in private. After twelve years of severe persecution, the Declaration brought a real measure of relief to all Dissenters. Under its provisions, licences were issued for their "teachers" and their meeting-places. Those for "teachers" were either general, with no mention of any particular meeting place, or for "teaching" at some specified place. Lyon Turner has examined the licences and calculated that 210 Baptists were licensed as teachers in England and Wales and just over 200 houses for worship.[4] Whitley has estimated that, at this time, there were about 420 Baptist preachers.[5] Some Baptists were wrongly described. Andrew Gifford, the pastor of a Particular Baptist Church in Bristol, was described as a Presbyterian.[6] John Bunyan, for reasons which will shortly appear, described himself as a Congregationalist. Many Baptists

[1] G. M. Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 364. [2] Whitley, *Bibliography*, Vol. I, p. 96.

[3] *Broadmead Records*, p. 106. These records give accounts of some amusing subterfuges employed by the church to outwit the authorities. They also testify to the severity of the persecution.

[4] *Original Records of Early Nonconformity under Persecution and Indulgence*, Vol. III, p. 729.

[5] H.B.B., p. 123. See also *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. I, pp. 156 ff.

[6] Gould, *Open Communion and the Baptists of Norwich*, p. cxii f. The licence is preserved in the Bristol Baptist College. Apparently Gifford added "Baptist" in his own hand.

refused to apply for licences, holding that Charles had acted unconstitutionally in issuing the Declaration without consent of Parliament, and claiming liberty of worship as their inalienable right. Moreover, they realized that the Declaration really aimed at bringing back Popery. However, the gaols were emptied and Bunyan was released from his prison in Bedford where he had lain twelve years.

About this time, the question of Mixed Communion raised considerable discussion among the Particular Baptists. Throughout his long pastorate Henry Jessey had never insisted on believer's baptism as a condition of church-membership. After his baptism by Knollys, his church was made up of both Baptists and Congregationalists, the question of baptism being left to the conscience of the individual. Jessey was unwilling to exclude from membership any believer who did not realize its importance. In modern terms, his was an open-membership church. John Bunyan's church at Bedford was of the same type. It had never made believer's baptism a prerequisite of church-membership. When, in 1672, Bunyan succeeded Gifford, who had baptized him as a believer, in the pastorate of the church, he was soon engaged in controversy with other Particular Baptists, like Kiffin and Danvers, who confined membership to those baptized as believers. In his *Differences in judgment about water baptism no bar to communion* (1673), he took the ground that "the Church of Christ hath no warrant to keep out of the communion the Christian that is discovered to be a visible saint of the word, the Christian that walketh according to his own light with God." Though he owned "water baptism to be God's ordinance," he refused to make "an idol of it." The appendix to the Particular Baptist Confession of 1677[1] says that for the sake of peace and unity, it omits all mention of the difference of opinion between those who "cannot hold Church-communion with any other than baptized believers and Churches constituted of such" and others who "have a greater liberty and freedom." But four years later we find Kiffin printing a defence of his position.

[1] See below, p. 105.

The controversy explains a great deal. It accounts for Bunyan styling himself as a Congregationalist in applying for licences under the Act of Indulgence of 1672. Those applications do not prove that Bunyan had adopted infant-baptism; they assert his neutrality on the question. The controversy also explains why Bunyan is claimed by both Congregationalists and Baptists; why his Bedford church finally became pedobaptist and why to this day the Bedfordshire County Union includes both Congregationalists and Baptists. More important still, the controversy explains why the man whom all the world knows, had so little influence upon his fellow-Baptists in his own lifetime.

The respite from persecution which followed Charles' Declaration of Indulgence was short-lived. Parliament was infuriated by the king's unconstitutional methods. The Lords supported the Commons in their demand for a withdrawal of the Declaration. With reluctance, Charles yielded and withdrew it. Parliament then followed up its triumph by passing the Test Act (1673). It required all who held any civil or military office under the Crown to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, to receive the Sacrament in a parish church, and to abjure the doctrine of transubstantiation. Though aimed more at the Romanists than the Dissenters, it shut the latter out of all military and civil offices, even from the obscurest positions in the Customs and Excise. Moreover, it showed that Parliament was determined to keep the Clarendon Code in full working order and to foil the king's policy of favour for Romanists under cover of toleration for Dissenters. Naturally persecution broke out again. The licences of 1672 were now useless, and the record of them provided informers with the means of knowing where conventicles were held and who were the leaders. Bunyan was cast into prison again and there wrote his *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The renewal of persecution had, however, brought Baptists and Congregationalists nearer to the Presbyterians who, since the Ejection of 1662, had defied the Conventicle Acts. This led both Particular and General Baptists to put out new Confessions. In both cases the aim appears to have been to demonstrate their

unity with other Protestant Dissenters, all of whom were resolutely opposed to Charles' Popish proclivities. To indicate their agreement with the Presbyterians and Congregationalists, the Particular Baptists put out a new Confession[1] in 1677 to show "our hearty agreement with them in that wholesome Protestant doctrine which . . . they have asserted." They admitted that they had based it on the Westminster Confession of 1648 and the revision thereof put out by the Congregationalists in 1658. The Confession of 1677 differs in scope and tone from the earlier Confession of 1644. Its Calvinism is more rigid, and the administration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper is confined to "those only who are qualified and thereunto called according to the commission of Christ." Church-members are defined not as baptized believers, but as those who give themselves "to the Lord and to one another by the will of God, in professed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel." Nothing is said about the restriction of the Supper to those baptized as believers. But the case for believer's baptism is argued in a long appendix, which covers all the points still raised between Baptists and Pedobaptists. Short work is made of the contention that infant-baptism is for the New Covenant what circumcision was for the Old. Circumcision was "suited only for the male children, baptism is an ordinance suited for every believer, whether male or female." The Confession was approved by the representatives of over a hundred churches who met in 1689, but it is not now endorsed by British Baptists, except by some who have remained Strict and Particular.

In the autumn of 1678, an ebullition of anti-Roman wrath swept through the nation, which firmly believed Titus Oates' story of a Popish plot.[2] In the next year, the General Baptists, therefore,

[1] Printed in McGlothlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 220 ff.

[2] Edward Terrill composed a special hymn for the Broadmead Church, Bristol, to sing. The first verse runs:

As papists still do seek to kill
the governors of our land,
The Lord of might doth bring to light
the plots they take in hand

(*Broadmead Records*, p. 389.)

followed the lead the Particulars had given them, and issued *An Orthodox Creed* which was stated to be "an essay to unite and confirm all true Protestants in the fundamental articles of the Christian religion against the errors of Rome." It was issued, not by the General Assembly, but by fifty-five Messengers, Elders and Brethren "in the name of many baptized Christians, or congregations in the several counties of, Bucks., Hertford, Bedford and Oxford." To conciliate the Calvinistic Presbyterians and Congregationalists, its articles on Election, Reprobation, Original Sin, and Perseverance were nothing like as Arminian in tone as John Smyth or Thomas Helwys would have made them. It repeats almost verbatim the words of the Particular Baptist Confession of 1677 about the administration of the Sacraments. It declares that believers are the only proper subjects of Baptism and that the mode is by immersion. Its anti-Roman polemic appears in its denunciation as superstitious of what it calls "the Popish doctrine" that infants dying unbaptized are in peril. Transubstantiation, the withholding of the cup from the laity, and infant-communion are stigmatized as idolatrous and superstitious. General Baptist characteristics appear in the article on the Extent of the Atonement and in its insistence upon the laying on of hands on baptized persons and on marriage within the community. The Creed was also quite definitely inspired by the desire to refute the Hoffmannite Christology which Matthew Caffyn (1628-1715), a farmer at Horsham and a General Baptist Messenger, was disseminating among the General Baptists of Kent and Sussex. The General Baptists of the Midlands were strongly opposed to Caffyn's views. In 1673, Thomas Monk, a Messenger and leader in Buckinghamshire, had put his finger on Caffyn's docetic error by publishing *A cure for the cankering error of the new Eutychians*. That the Orthodox Creed was aimed against Caffyn is made clear by the remark in the preface, "We are sure that the denying of baptism is a less evil than to deny the Divinity or Humanity of Christ."[1] The articles

[1] The Creed is printed by McGlothlin (*op. cit.*, pp. 124 ff.), who has reprinted Crosby's version of it, so leaving out the preface, the signatures, etc. I have consulted the copy in Rawdon College Library. The only other surviving copy is in the Angus Library of Regent's Park College, Oxford.

on the Incarnation and the Union of the Two Natures in Christ are particularly full and rule out Hoffmannism in language reminiscent of the Tome of Leo and the Definition of Chalcedon. Article 38 would surprise most Baptists. The Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and even the Athanasian Creed are given in full. It is said of them that they "ought thoroughly to be received and believed . . . and catechetically opened, and expounded in all Christian families, for the edification of young and old; which might be a means to prevent heresy in doctrine and practice." There is a return to true Baptist principles in the article on Liberty of Conscience which declares that Jesus Christ "is the only Lord of conscience." It is generally supposed that the Creed was drafted by Thomas Monk. If that is so, he was a remarkable farmer. The preface contains quotations in Latin from the works of Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, Gregory the Great, and Bernard of Clairvaux.

Fear of Popery naturally raised the question of the king's successor. For some time the Whigs tried to divert the succession from Charles' brother, James, who was an avowed Roman Catholic, to the Duke of Monmouth, one of Charles' illegitimate sons. To prevent them passing an Exclusion Bill, Charles dissolved Parliament, and, for the last four years of his life, ruled without it. The Tories sided with the king in his despotism. "With the militia in its hands, the Tory party enforced the Clarendon Code with the utmost cruelty and rigour. The gaols were again crowded with the bolder of the Non-conformists. . . . Such religious persecution is the strongest provocation to rebellion that the subject can undergo."[1] In the Rye House Plot (1683), three Baptists took a leading part, all of them old Cromwellian officers. Colonel Richard Rumbold, who had served at Dunbar and Worcester and had been one of the guards about the scaffold at the execution of Charles I, was now a maltster at the Rye House at Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire. "Near by, the narrow road to Newmarket ran between high banks, where the king often passed on his way to

[1] Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 419. See Whitley, H.B.B., pp. 145 ff. for some details of the persecution of Baptists.

the race-meetings or home. To block the road and seize the king's person seemed feasible enough: the plan was made and the day was fixed. But swords would have to be drawn; some of them feared what they might have to do if the king resisted. Luck was against them. An accidental fire at Newmarket burnt down half the town: the king and his brother came away before their time and the plot was frustrated. Ten weeks later one of the conspirators sold the secret to the government. Several of the small fry were condemned and executed."[1] Rumbold got away and so did Colonel Abraham Holmes, who had propagated Baptist views in Leith in 1654 and had been in prison for three years since the Restoration. The third Baptist, Captain Thomas Walcot, who had served in Ireland and been licensed to preach at Bungay in 1672, was among those executed.

The accession of James II in February 1685, was soon followed by other plots to get rid of a Catholic on the throne. The Earl of Argyle and the Duke of Monmouth, with certain Whig exiles, concerted a plot in Holland. Argyle slipped across to Scotland and raised the standard of revolt there. He was soon taken and executed, and with him Richard Rumbold. Bishop Burnet says that Rumbold declared that "it could never enter his thoughts that God had made the greater part of mankind with saddles on their backs and bridles in their mouths, and some few booted and spurred to ride the rest."[2] In June, Monmouth landed at Lyme Regis and raised the West where Nonconformity was strong and had been made desperate by persecution. He was proclaimed king, but the rebellion was a complete fiasco. Monmouth was taken and executed and so was Abraham Holmes who commanded a battalion at Sedgemoor. Another Baptist, Colonel Henry Danvers, who had written on baptism and against the laying on of hands, was called upon by proclamation to surrender for his share in the rebellion. He fled abroad and died in Utrecht in 1687.

Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys then held the Bloody Assize in the

[1] G. N. Clark, *The Later Stuarts*, p. 100.
[2] Stackhouse's abridgement of Bishop Burnet's *History of my own Times* (Everyman's Library), p. 229.

Western circuit. From the bench he swore and laughed at his victims, whose corpses and hewn quarters decorated the highways and public places in town and country. "Many formerly flourishing churches like Taunton, Lyme, Honiton, Dalwood, suffered most severely, as is seen sometimes in their records, but more often by the disappearance of all records."[1] Two of William Kiffin's grandsons, Benjamin and William Hewling, were hanged, dying as they said "for English liberties and the Protestant religion." William who had come over in Monmouth's personal bodyguard, was only nineteen and Benjamin twenty-two. When Benjamin asked that he and others might sing a hymn, the sheriff told him that it must be with a rope round their necks, which offer was cheerfully accepted. In London, Jeffreys had Elizabeth Gaunt burnt alive at Tyburn for harbouring one of the rebels who himself gave her away. Bishop Burnet says she was "a woman who was an Anabaptist in London, but singularly charitable to people of all professions."[2] She was the last woman to be executed for treason in England.

The reign of terror which followed the defeat of Monmouth continued till James put out a Declaration of Indulgence in April 1687, suspending all penal laws on matters ecclesiastical. The jails were emptied, chapels were built and, since that date, there has been no active persecution of Dissenters. They were grateful for release from prison, but ranged themselves with the rest of the nation against a Roman Catholic on the throne, which was offered to James' Protestant daughter, Mary, and her husband, William of Orange. William landed at Tor Bay in November 1688 and, the next month, James fled to France. The "Glorious Revolution" had been bloodless.

Among those who lived to see the Revolution were Thomas Grantham, Thomas Collier, Hanserd Knollys, William Kiffin, and Benjamin Keach. Collier was the leader of the Particular Baptists of the West, but little is known of his life, except that the Western Association in 1655 appointed and ordained him

[1] Whitley, H.B.B., p. 149. Samuel Lark, pastor of the Lyme Church, was hanged.
[2] *op. cit.*, p. 234.

"General Superintendent and Messenger to all the Associated Churches." Knollys died at a ripe old age, occupying his later years writing upon apocalyptic which had always interested him and infected his mind with Fifth Monarchy views. Kiffin had had a taste of James' callousness. When the king abolished the charter of the City of London, he made Kiffin one of the new aldermen. Kiffin was summoned to the palace. "I have put you down, Mr. Kiffin, for an alderman of London," said James. The old man burst into tears and replied, "Sir, I am worn out. I am unfit to serve Your Majesty or the City. And, sir, the death of my poor boys broke my heart. That wound is as fresh as ever. I shall carry it to my grave." The king was confused for a moment and then said, "Mr. Kiffin, I will find a balsam for that sore." As Macaulay says,[1] "They are the words of a hardhearted and lowminded man, unable to conceive any laceration of the affections for which a place or a pension would not be a full compensation." Kiffin was next threatened with a lodging in Newgate; and he knew that he was liable to heavy fines if he accepted the office without taking the Sacrament according to Anglican rites. For some months he held out and only submitted so far as to take the title of Alderman and abstained from acting as a Justice of the Peace. After nine months he was discharged from the office to his great satisfaction. For sixty years he was the pastor of the Devonshire Square Church, but his business interests took so much of his time that he was glad to have a succession of assistants. "Though his contribution to theory was slight, William Kiffin was one of the ablest of the Baptist leaders of his generation. His career illustrates at once the rising social and economic strength of the communion and its amazing gains in public repute during the period."[2]

Thomas Grantham (1634–1692) was a Lincolnshire man who belonged, he said, to the "poor kindred" of an ancient family. Tradition makes him a tailor by trade and afterwards a farmer. He was baptized at Boston in 1653 and in 1656 became the

[1] *History of England* (edition, 1858), Vol. II, p. 229.
[2] Jordan, Vol. III, p. 533 n. Cf. Haller, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

pastor (elder) of a General Baptist church which met at Halton-Holegate, near Spilsby. As a result of his zeal, several Baptist groups sprang up in South Lincolnshire. In 1666, he was ordained as a Messenger. He presented to Charles II several petitions from the Lincolnshire Baptists. About 1685, he moved to Norwich and founded a General Baptist church there and others at Yarmouth and Lynn. A prolific author, he gathered together much that he and others had written into his *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678). Perhaps his several spells in jail gave him an opportunity for the wide reading which his work displays. When the Presbyterians declared that Baptists cared nothing for infants, Grantham retorted that they were the real offenders, since they believed that "the greatest part of dying infants shall be damned." To the Calvinists of Norwich who opposed him so bitterly, he said, "Seeing you think that Christ died but for some only, show me sufficient testimony from Scripture that He died for yourself; and name one (if you can) now living in this great city, for whom Christ died not." He was buried just within the west door of St. Stephen's Church, Norwich, whose vicar read the service in the presence of a large crowd. The vicar, with whom Grantham was on the friendliest terms, was later buried in the same grave.

Benjamin Keach (1640–1704) was a self-educated Buckinghamshire man, a tailor by trade, who became a minister of the General Baptist Church at Winslow. In 1664, he was put on trial at Aylesbury for having taken certain "damnable positions contrary to the book of Common Prayer" in his *Childs Instructor; or, a new and easy primer*. Lord Chief Justice Hyde handled him very arbitrarily and told him that he knew he was a Fifth Monarchy man. Keach was sentenced to a fine of twenty pounds and two weeks' imprisonment, and to be put in pillory on separate days at Aylesbury and Winslow.[1] His book was to be burned by the common hangman before his face. As all the copies were destroyed, he rewrote it from memory and it ran into several editions. It reveals the interest Baptists were taking

[1] Full details in Crosby, Vol. II, pp. 186 ff.

in the winning of the young—an interest shared by Bunyan who, like Keach, also wrote doggerel verse for them. Keach came to London and in 1668, was ordained by prayer and laying on of hands as the elder of the Southwark Church.[1] Contacts with Kiffin and Knollys and the influence of his Calvinistic second wife, carried Keach over to the Particular Baptists. With some of his followers he established a Particular church at Horsley Down, from which there were several secessions when he introduced congregational hymn-singing, of which he was an enthusiastic advocate. His church seems to have been the first church in all England to introduce the singing of hymns as distinct from paraphrases and psalms. Keach was an outstanding figure among London Baptist ministers, but he got into trouble when he tried to get other General Baptist churches to follow his example. He was a successful author who also kept a bookshop to augment the small stipend then paid to ministers. He expounded the Parables and Scripture metaphors, wrote in favour of laying hands on the newly baptized, and also produced a religious allegory before Bunyan wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*.[2] He was buried at his former General Baptist Church.

The remarkable career of the General Seventh-Day Baptist, Peter Chamberlen (1601–1683), is epitomized on his tomb, which still stands in the churchyard of Woodham Mortimer, Maldon, Essex. The inscription runs:

> The said Peter Chamberlen took the degree of Doctor in Physic in several Universities both at home and abroad, and lived such above three score years, being Physician in Ordinary to three Kings and Queens of England, viz.: King James and Queen Ann; King Charles the First and Queen Mary; King Charles the Second and Queen Katherine; and also to some foreign Princes; having travelled most parts of Europe, and speaking most of the languages. As for his religion he was a Christian keeping the commandments of God and faith of Jesus, being baptized about the year 1648 and keeping the seventh day for the Sabbath above 32 years. To tell his learning and his life to men: Enough is said by here lies Chamberlen.

[1] Whitley (*Bibliography*, Vol. I, p. 114) claims this as the first recorded ordination of any dissenting minister since the Restoration. Contrast Colligan, *Eighteenth Century Nonconformity*, pp. 74 ff, who gives a later date.

[2] See Whitley, H.B.B., pp. 132, 137 ff, for the allegorical writings of Bunyan and Keach.

Chamberlen was of Huguenot extraction and was proud of the fact as the arms on the end of his tomb show. Educated at the Merchant Taylors' School and Emmanuel College, Cambridge, he afterwards studied at the universities of Heidelberg and Padua, and was admitted a Fellow of the College of Physicians in 1628. A man of progressive ideas, he advocated many measures which were ahead of his times. One of his proposals, which provoked much opposition, was that the midwives of the City of London and its suburbs should be organized into a sisterhood. He defended himself by publishing in 1647 *A Voice in Rhama; or, the Crie of Women and Children. Echoed forth in the Compassions of Peter Chamberlen.* He also advocated public baths as a means of eradicating disease, and a public bank as a means of lightening the lot of the poor and of paying the soldiers more promptly. He patented a method of writing and printing phonetically. Part of his reputation as an accoucheur rested upon the secret use he made of certain midwifery forceps invented by an earlier member of his family. He was a believer in astrology at a time when no physician was considered accomplished who knew nothing of that art.

In his earlier days, Chamberlen belonged to the church which met in Lothbury and was deeply tinged with Fifth Monarchy ideas. Under his leadership, it went over to Seventh-Day views in 1659 and later migrated to Mill Yard. An unwearying advocate of Baptist and Seventh-Day opinions, Chamberlen's social position and influence made him a tower of strength to a despised party. During the latter years of his long life, he lived at Woodham Mortimer Hall, where in 1818 in a secret room some of his midwifery forceps were found. At the close of his life he was in correspondence with the Archbishop of Canterbury. The time had come, he said, when Christians should discover "not how far they can differ and quarrel with each other, but how close they can unite and become all of Christ."[1]

[1] The account of Chamberlen in the D.N.B. should be supplemented by *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. II, 9 ff., 110 ff., 129 ff., 190 ff.; III, 176 ff.

Another Seventh-Day Baptist was Francis Bampfield (1615-1684). He came of a Devonshire county family and was educated at Wadham College, Oxford. He held livings in Dorset and was made a prebendary of Exeter Cathedral in 1641, being appointed vicar of Sherborne in 1657. During the Commonwealth Period he was a Royalist in politics and read the Prayer Book Service longer than any other minister in the county, until he was disturbed by the soldiery. In 1662, however, he was ejected and, declining to take the oath of allegiance, was imprisoned in Dorchester jail for nearly nine years. While in prison, he and other ministers preached to the people of the town who came "every day once, and on the Lord's Day twice; till at last the jailer was corrected and an order made against jailors letting in people into the prisons to hear." About this time Bampfield adopted Seventh-Day Baptist views and baptized himself in the river at Salisbury. When, in 1672, he secured a licence under the Indulgence, he refused to avow himself as an adherent of the three recognized sects and had it made out to him as "a nonconforming minister." By special order of Lord Treasurer Clifford it was made out not on paper but on parchment. Bampfield was unique in this: and perhaps he owed the honour to the fact that he had been a Royalist in politics. In 1673, he settled in London and married Damaris Town at the Mill Yard Church, which fact seems to show that Seventh-Day Baptists, Calvinist and Arminian, were on friendly terms. In 1676, he organized a Seventh-Day Church in his house in Bethnal Green. Five years later, he hired Pinners' Hall for the worship of this church. Periodically he visited the Seventh-Day churches in the country and projected an assembly for them. Early in 1684, he was sentenced at Old Bailey to be outlawed and remain in prison at the king's pleasure, for his persistent refusal to take the oath of allegiance. He died in Newgate very shortly after at the age of sixty-nine. He was one of the few highly trained Baptist ministers of his time and anxious to impress upon his fellow-Baptists the value of learning. He bequeathed his books to his church for the benefit of young students. His younger brother, Thomas, also

adopted Seventh-Day views. He was Member of Parliament for Exeter and Recorder for that city, as well as Speaker of the House of Commons in Richard Cromwell's Parliament. The Bampfields were typical English eccentrics such as this country only can produce.

CHAPTER VI

Toleration and Decline

SOON after William and Mary were seated on the throne, a Toleration Act (1689) was passed without much difficulty. Compulsory attendance at the services of the Church of England was abolished. Dissenters were allowed to worship provided they did so behind unlocked doors. The Conventicle Act and the Act of Uniformity were not repealed but it was enacted that they did not in future apply to Dissenters who proved their loyalty by taking the oaths of allegiance and supremacy before the justices of the peace at the general sessions of the peace. Those who objected to oaths, as did the Quakers and not a few Baptists, were allowed to make declarations. Dissenting ministers were still required to sign the Thirty-nine Articles with certain exceptions. Baptists were also exempted from signing the twenty-seventh Article on infant-baptism. All meeting-houses had to be registered in the court of bishop, archdeacon or magistrate at a charge of sixpence. The Test and Corporation Acts were also left unrepealed and no indulgence was granted to Papists and Anti-trinitarians. The Toleration Act was a typical English compromise. After two revolutions, Dissenters had secured a real measure of religious liberty, but they were still disqualified from office, though no longer criminals. The State Church was still privileged but could no longer persecute.

A few days before the Toleration Act became law, the General Baptists held a General Assembly in London, the minutes of which were "digested and written" by Thomas Grantham. The Particular Baptists followed suit in the autumn and declared their

intention of holding similar meetings yearly. Obviously, both thought that a better day had dawned and they could now begin to plan for the future. Little did they dream that the granting of their hearts' desire would be followed by a leanness in their souls. Instead of advancing, they stagnated and even retreated. It was no fault of theirs that a change came over the religious climate of England. A cold fog of religious indifference descended upon the nation which for a century had been preoccupied with religious questions. It now began to think of other things, such as commerce and science. Religion was displaced from the centre of interest. The eighteenth century was an age of reason. The Deists whittled down the supernatural element in Christianity and reduced its fundamentals to the mere essentials of the natural reason. Philosophy became sceptical under the influence of Locke and Hume. Science made extraordinary progress and attracted to itself great attention.[1] Morality sank to a low level and in all classes of society gambling and drunkenness were rife. The State Church seemed powerless and sunk in lethargy. When Bishop Butler was offered the archbishopric of Canterbury, he declined it, saying that it was "too late for him to try to support a falling church." The Dissenters were little better. Lethargy had come over them, as if their fight for existence had exhausted them. Piette exaggerates little, if at all, when he says: "With the prospect of struggles, tortures and hanging gone, life seemed to lose all its zest. For them religious fervour and persecution were things which went hand in hand. When one ceased, the other likewise disappeared."[2] Arianism affected every religious body and the Presbyterians in particular. By the end of the century, few orthodox Presbyterian congregations were left in England. Socinianism had dug their grave.[3]

Both General and Particular Baptists were, of course, affected

[1] See Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 27 ff, 359 ff. It is worth pointing out that a Baptist ironmonger, Thomas Newcomen (1663–1729), invented the steam-engine. See Clark, *ibid.*, pp. 41 ff. and D.N.B.

[2] *op. cit.*, p. 177.

[3] The Presbyterian Church of England, which in 1944 celebrated its centenary as an independent self-governing body, is a more recent growth and has Scottish antecedents.

by the religious indifference of the times. Moreover, along with other Dissenters, they were thrust into the background of national life by the Test and Corporation Acts still in force. They had no share in the administration of the state, county, borough or parish. They could not hold commissions in the Army or Navy, nor could they enter the learned professions, as the universities were closed against them. "Baptists were now in a backwater, well off the main channel of national life. Whether in State Papers or in private correspondence, they simply disappear henceforward, or at most appear as obscure satellites, to be discerned occasionally, among the 'Dissenters.' "[1]

For this reason it will no longer be necessary for us to trace the political background of the period. We can concentrate on the interior life and problems of the Baptists, who were hardly affected at all by the Occasional Conformity Act, which the High Church Tory party pressed through Parliament in the reign of Queen Anne. It was aimed at those Dissenters who qualified for office by taking the Sacrament in the State Church just previous to their election. It imposed heavy penalties on any person who, having thus qualified, thereafter attended a dissenting place of worship. Only one Baptist[2] is known to have adopted the practice of "occasional conformity" and he was promptly cast out of his church for profaning the Sacrament by using it as "the stepping-stone to office, and the picklock of a place." It was a wealthy Baptist, Allen Evans, a member of the Wild Street Church, who for thirteen years fought the Corporation of the City of London, which had passed a bye-law imposing a fine of £600 upon a citizen refusing to serve as Sheriff. By nominating wealthy and conscientious Dissenters, the Corporation raised some £15,000 to pay for the new Mansion House. When Evans was elected in 1754, he challenged the legality of the bye-law in the courts. The case was carried to the House of Lords, where Lord Mansfield finally decided in favour of Evans in 1767. His Lordship remarked: "It is now no crime for a man to say he is a Dissenter; nor is it a crime for him not to take the Sacrament according to the

[1] Whitley, H.B.B., p. 163. [2] Ivimey, Vol. III, pp. 228 ff., 428 ff.

rites of the Church of England: nay, the crime is if he does it contrary to the dictates of his conscience."[1] Evans was in his eighty-second year by the time the case was finally settled.

We must now trace the fortunes of the Baptists with a view to indicating the special causes underlying the decline of both parties. The Generals and the Particulars may be treated separately, for the gulf between them was still deep, even though in practice believers' baptism did form a certain bond between them.

In their church organization, the General Baptists were connexionalists rather than independents. Here again it is possible to trace Mennonite influence. Their ideas on church government are set out fully in the Orthodox Creed of 1679, which was never endorsed by their General Assembly but in these matters it may be taken as a fairly safe guide to their practice. They had a three-fold order of ministers: Messengers, Elders, and Deacons. The Messengers were officers of the Church, whereas the Elders and Deacons were officers of the local congregation. The Elder was the pastor of a local church which could remove him for teaching false doctrine or "for a sinful life"; but he was supposed to remain with his church for life. The Lincolnshire Association in 1696 resolved: "That there is nothing which we can justly fix upon, that can warrant an elder to forsake his people: nor can any elder, who has gone away from his own people, be established as an elder over other people in another place."[2] There were also preachers other than elders, who were called Ministers. They had to be tested and ordained but they were not usually allowed to baptize or preside at the Lord's Supper. The deacons performed the usual office of looking after the churches' charitable funds. Like the elders, they were chosen by the local church and ordained to their office. The Messengers (2 Cor. viii, 23) were regarded as the successors, not of the New Testament Apostles but of its apostles, such as Timothy and Titus. They were to be chosen by the common suffrage of the church. After a solemn ordination by fasting,

[1] Ivimey, Vol. III, p. 285. [2] Quoted by Taylor, Vol. I, p. 419.

prayer and the imposition of hands, they were to have "the government of those churches that had suffrage in their election." Their primary business, however, was to preach the Gospel "to the world or unbelievers."

We do not know when Messengers were first introduced. The Confession of the Midland Churches of 1651 does not mention them, but they appear to be well established in the "Humble Representation and Vindication"[1] put out in 1654 by "many Messengers, Elders and Brethren of the Baptized Churches . . . met together in the City of London." Two years later the General Assembly laid it down that Messengers may not choose Messengers "without the common consent of the churches."[2] When in 1674, Thomas Grantham, himself a Messenger, wrote his defence of the office, he claimed that it was a divine institution, but he was careful to say that the Messengers were in no sense the successors of the twelve Apostles. Nevertheless, God has given to His Church a ministry of Messengers which, though inferior to that of the Apostles, is in succession to theirs, "in such things as were ordinary and fixed to that office."[3] He stresses the point that the main function of the Messengers was "to preach the Gospel where it is not known; to plant churches where there is none; to ordain Elders in churches remote, and to assist in dispensing the holy Mysteries."[4] It is clear from Grantham's little book that the office of Messenger was disliked by some. The Messengers were being charged with magnifying their office and it had been pointed out that there was no one to correct them if they fell into errors of life or doctrine. Grantham was evidently trying to mollify these objectors when he wrote:[5]

> Yet have they no dominion over their (the churches') faith, to force themselves upon them whether they will or no, especially such churches as they never planted . . . We give them no more superintendency than Timothy and Titus had, whose care was for the churches indifferently, so that their pre-eminence was only a degree of honour (not of Power) in being greater

[1] See above, pp. 84 ff. [2] Whitley, M.G.A., Vol. I, p. 7.
[3] *The Successors of the Apostles*, p. 3. [4] *ibid.*, p. 20. [5] *ibid.*, pp. 16 ff.

servants than others . . . though we say they are only in a regular capacity to ordain Elders in congregations newly planted, which have no officers; yet where the churches have an eldership, there they are in a capacity to ordain their own officers; yea, they may ordain and send forth Messengers . . . the sum of that which we have said is this: that as God hath given to His Church a fixed ministry of Bishops, Elders, Pastors, etc., to take care of particular churches, so He hath given her a travelling ministry, unfixed in respect of particular societies, to whom it pertains . . . to take all occasions to cause the light of the glorious Gospel to shine unto such as sit in darkness, to plant churches, to confirm or settle them in the faith, to visit and comfort those who have believed through grace.

After this time no doubts appear as to the scripturalness and necessity of the Messenger's office. It was usual for him to be chosen from the elders but one case is on record of a man being ordained as Messenger who was apparently not even a deacon. It was never explicitly said that only Messengers could ordain Messengers but there was a tendency in this direction.[1] Messengers continued, like all other General Baptist ministers, to work for their own living, but their travelling expenses were met by the churches. As the evangelical fervour of the General Baptists declined, it became more and more difficult to secure men for the office. Many churches refused to surrender their elder or pastor for this work. The usefulness of the Messengers' office has been variously estimated. Adam Taylor says:[2] "The power of this office seems to have increased as the General Baptist cause declined;" and he backs his statement by quoting the remarkable powers assigned to Messengers by the Lincolnshire Association in 1775. But Taylor belonged to the New Connexion which declined to adopt the office. His point of view is revealed by his remark, "Such an Inquisitor-general is totally incompatible with the independency of the churches, professed by these Christians."

The local churches were linked together into district associations and, at the head of the structure, stood the General Assembly (Heb. xii. 23) which dealt with matters sent up to it by the churches through the associations. On the General Assembly all the Mes-

[1] cf. Whitley, M.G.A., Vol. II, p. 71 n., and Taylor, Vol. II, p. 101.
[2] Taylor, Vol. I, p. 415 n. cf. Whitley, M.G.A., Vol. II, p. 204 n.

sengers had a place and all the pastors or elders, but churches also sent their representatives.[1] Article 39 of the Orthodox Creed of 1679 assigns great power to the General Assembly, but Thomas Grantham said that, while its decisions should be considered with great respect, "yet we may lawfully doubt what they deliver unless they confirm it by the Word of the Lord."[2] The Assembly has met regularly, except in time of persecution, from the middle of the seventeenth century to this day. In the earlier days it dealt constantly with those questions which agitated the General Baptist churches but it easily lent itself to becoming a court of appeal to which an aggrieved individual could apply for the rescission of a decision made by a church or an association. Professor A. H. Newman thinks that this had the effect of making every local difficulty pervade the entire Connexion.[3] Doubtless he had in mind the case of Richard Haines (1633–1685), about which a word may be said, since it throws considerable light on the General Baptists of his time. Haines was a member of Caffyn's church at Horsham. Farmer, inventor, manufacturer, a man of wealth and ability, he wrote pamphlets on such topics as the prevention of poverty and unemployment, and a new way of improving cider. In 1672, he was granted by licence a monopoly for the process he had invented of cleaning hop-clover. Caffyn classed all patentees as covetous, with idolaters and unclean persons (I Cor. v. 11), and excommunicated Haines, who then appealed to the General Assembly, where after some years and much debate, the excommunication was rescinded.

The central beliefs of the General Baptists are registered in their various Confessions of Faith, to which reference has already been made. Their primary doctrine was, of course, that Christ died for all men and not for some only. At an early date they were greatly attracted to Heb. vi. 1 and 2. They found in the Six Principles there named (repentance from dead works, faith towards God, the doctrine of baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection

[1] In 1799 the ministers were allowed seats on the Assembly *ex-officio*.
[2] Quoted by Taylor, Vol. I, pp. 461 ff.
[3] *Schaff-Herzog*, Vol. I, p. 462.

of the dead, and eternal judgment), a convenient and scriptural summary of their faith and practice, provided it was added that they believed in a universal redemption. In regard to the Six Principles, they differed from the Particular Baptists only in their interpretation of the fourth. They laid hands not only on their Messengers, elders and deacons at their ordination, but also on all newly baptized believers, "that they may receive the promise of the Holy Spirit."[1] A few early Particular Baptist churches had the same custom,[2] but among the General Baptists it was almost universal. In 1674 their theologian, Thomas Grantham, in his *The Fourth Principle of Christs Doctrine Vindicated*, asked "whether the neglect of this Principle do not lead Christians too much to neglect one of the greatest blessings of the New Covenant, even the Sealing Spirit of Promise?" His grandson, Grantham Killingworth, writing in 1757, admitted that he knew two congregations and had heard of several others in the West of England that omitted the imposition of hands.[3]

Among the General Baptists three other customs were fairly widely spread. (1) Like the Mennonites, they practised washing the feet of the saints. They declared that it was "commanded and blest by Christ" and that, "when performed decently and in order," it tended "to produce affection among the brethren."[4] By 1771, it was dying out,[5] though the Messenger, Daniel Dobell, wrote in that year, "I have been in conscientious practice of it upward of forty years; and can't see as yet that I could justify myself to live in the neglect thereof." (2) They anointed their sick with oil according to the command of James v. 14 and 15. Grantham Killingworth says, "I myself have known several persons, to whom it has been administered with the most surprising success; yea even with instantaneous cure."[6] (3) On the basis of Acts xv. 20 many refused to eat blood. None of these three customs was ever made a

[1] Standard Confession of 1660, Article 12.
[2] Whitley, M.G.A., Vol. I, p. xx.
[3] *A Full and Particular Answer to Mr. Whiston's Address to the Baptists*, p. 21.
[4] Cited by Taylor, Vol. I, p. 451. The date is 1659.
[5] *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. I, pp. 129 ff.
[6] *op. cit.*, p. 10.

condition of communion or is ever referred to in the minutes of the General Assembly.

There were, however, two questions frequently brought before the Assembly. (1) Again and again the Assembly laid down the principle that marriage out of the communion was unlawful (2 Cor. vi. 14). The believer who married out of the Church deserved excommunication. The question often troubled the Assembly. The endogamic principle drove many out of the fellowship and so weakened the churches. It also tended to make Association meetings places where a good deal of match-making was done. In 1744, the Assembly relaxed its harsh attitude. The Bessels Green Church sent up a case for its decision. On a legal point the Assembly side-stepped the issue but commissioned Matthew Randall to send a private reply to the enquiry. His letter was reproduced in the Assembly's minute book.[1] The writer says he is expressing only a private opinion. In his view mixed marriages are dangerous but the Scripture is not clear. Exclusion is not expedient, for "there are many candidates kept thereby from joining with such churches, till they see how Providence shall dispose of them." Kindness rather than censure is desirable. The letter goes on:

> Now since among us in this nation the women are not permitted to look out for themselves; and when they have no offers from among the men of their own community, what must they do? Must they, on pain of excommunication, refuse every sober, virtuous, christianlike person merely because he has not happened to be baptized by immersion on profession of faith? Is this consistent with Christian charity and forbearance? Yea, as to both sexes, 'tis scarcely possible, sometimes, not to transgress: the accidental sight or conversation of strangers; their agreeable mien, complexion, or deportment, often create such mutual liking and affection, as shall render marriage almost necessary and unavoidable.

(2) At their first Assembly after the Revolution, the General Baptists considered the question of psalm-singing. Some churches had evidently introduced the sol-fa method. The Assembly decided that this was "so strangely foreign to the evangelical

[1] Printed in Whitley, M.G.A., Vol. II, pp. 72 ff

worship that it was not conceived anyways safe for the churches to admit to such carnal formalities." It reiterated the rule laid down by Thomas Grantham that the singing of psalms in public worship should be by single voices only. "As the prayer of one in the church is the prayer of the whole church so the singing of one in the church is the singing of the whole church."[1] The question of hymn-singing was not then raised. Grantham had strongly opposed the singing of men's "own composures in a mixed multitude." He probably knew that Benjamin Keach had introduced hymn-singing for a short time into his London General Baptist Church. At this date (1689), the General Baptists as a whole were evidently opposed even to singing the Psalms congregationally. By 1733, the Assembly had moved a little and could say: "There is very few that belong to this Assembly who either practise or approve the way of singing men's composures with tuneable notes and a mixed multitude; but. . . we do not think it justifiable for us to refuse to join with them in a General Assembly."[2] The General Baptists were a long time before they developed any interest in church-praise. Their attitude was that all novelties were dangerous.

All the first General Baptist ministers were untrained and unpaid men. Many earned their living by manual labour. One of their Midland leaders, Francis Stanley (*d.* 1696), said that "some ministers had spent the great part of their outward substance in the service of the churches; some their all; and some more than their all."[3] The result, of course, was a declining supply of ministers and constant complaints from the churches that they were in "a sinking and languishing condition," for lack of ministers. The General Baptists had made a bad beginning when the Midland churches in their Confession of 1651 said in their Article 61: ". . . the ministers of the Gospel ought to be content with necessary food and raiment, and to labour with their hands, that they may not be over-chargeable." In 1704, the General Assembly

[1] Whitley, M.G.A., Vol. I, p. 27. Grantham stressed the words "one by one" in I Corinthians xiv, 31. For his views on singing, see Goadby, *Byepaths in Baptist History*, pp. 322 ff.

[2] Whitley, M.G.A., Vol. II, p. 18. [3] Quoted by Goadby, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

received a proposal from the Kent Association that a fund should be raised for the ministry as a means of remedying decay. The Assembly was cautious but agreed that such a fund should be raised but enacted that, first of all, the payment of ministers should be preached as scriptural in the churches and that the fund should be only for "elders and gifted brethren that are in want and not supplied other ways." The question of the education of young ministers was not mooted till the Assembly of 1790. Six years later a beginning was made and a few ministers were educated.

Two General Baptist elders in London stood out as better educated than most. Dr. William Russell (1634–1703) was also a Messenger but his professional duties made his attendance at the General Assembly very infrequent. Crosby says he was educated at Cambridge, "and there created Doctor of Physic." He was chemist in ordinary to Charles II, published many medical works and was famous for his Russell's powder which was widely advertised. He championed the Baptist cause in the last public disputation held under royal licence. The place was Portsmouth, the theme the subjects and manner of baptism. His opponents were the Presbyterians in whose meeting-house the debate was held, in the presence of the governor, lieutenant-governor, mayor and magistrates, and "a large and respectable auditory." The town-clerk took a record of the proceedings which lasted from ten in the morning to six in the afternoon. As usual, both sides claimed the victory, and a violent pamphlet war followed. Charles Bulkley (1719–1797) was a grandson of Matthew Henry and was trained at Northampton by Doddridge. After a short time as a Presbyterian minister, he joined the General Baptists and was Elder of the White's Alley Church in London for over fifty years. He was so busy writing the philosophical tracts which secured him a place in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, that at his death the original and endowed General Baptist church had only five men and three women in membership, and had kept no minutes for many years.

Clearly the General Baptists were becoming fossilized by their obstinate clinging to old ways. Times had changed but they were

still enamoured of some of the Sect-type ideas which they had inherited from the Mennonites or derived from their biblicism. Their rigorous discipline, their backward look, their lifelong pastorates and their unwillingness to rise to the conception of an educated and separated ministry hastened their decline. They often met in the homes of their church-officers and so had no permanent meeting-houses; and a cause would disappear sometimes if a leader was compelled to leave a district. Their geographical distribution also told against them. They had churches in London but hardly any in the large towns. They were emphatically a rural community whose congregations were often very small, and they never established themselves in large tracts of England. But, above all, their vitality was drained away when their body was pervaded by Socinianism. Their belief in a universal redemption had made them earnest in preaching the Gospel to all. Their Messengers were travelling evangelists, but now they either died out or ceased to itinerate. In spite of their connexional organization, ruin came when they gradually adopted Arian and Socinian views of the Person of Christ. Matthew Caffyn had continued to propagate his Hoffmannite Christology. He was a man of position among them, a Messenger for half a century and better educated than most of their leaders, for he had been at Oxford for a while during the Interregnum. Moreover, he lived to a ripe old age. Twice he split the General Assembly.[1] He appears to have left behind his Hoffmannite views and to have become an Arian or Socinian. He passed from denying the reality of Our Lord's Human Nature to a denial of His Deity. Gradually the General Assembly came to contain more and more members who were Socinians at heart. Open Socinians, like Joshua Toulmin, were admitted to it.

Thereafter many General Baptist churches dwindled and became extinct or became Unitarian. The process may be illustrated by what happened in two churches in the West. Of the pastor of the Trowbridge Church it is said that he "contributed to promote the knowledge of rational religion, awaken attention to free inquiry, and cherish just and liberal sentiments." One is not surprised

[1] Details in Taylor, Vol. I, pp. 463 ff.

to learn that he Socinianised the church and that "A bad life seems to have been the only heresy of which the Trowbridge congregation have ever taken notice."[1] A shaft of light is thrown upon the Honiton Church, which had been Arianized by a retired serge-manufacturer, by their remark:

> Now we, the members of this little Christian Society . . . are in the general but low in our worldly circumstances; but we that have been buried in Christ in Baptism humbly hope we have some blessed stock in Faith and a treasure in the Heavens.[2]

The Northamptonshire Association of General Baptists simply fell to pieces, but the Moulton Church was taken over by the Particular Baptists; nor was it the only church thus saved from extinction. Before their decline set in, the General Baptists had, however, transplanted their principles to America, where Six Principle Baptists still exist;[3] and their original emphasis on the truth that Christ died for all men was revived, as we shall see in our next chapter.

Different were the causes underlying the decline of the Particular Baptists who were not greatly affected by Socinianism. The heresy which brought them into disrepute was Antinomianism. They, too, were reluctant to train and pay their ministers adequately, but they did more than the General Baptists in this direction. A minority among them was awake to the need of a qualified ministry. Nevertheless, their ministers were so badly paid that not a few kept schools to eke out a livelihood. It was largely their reluctance to organize that prevented them from making any real impact on the national life. They clung to the independency they had inherited from the Separatists out of whom they had sprung, and they made almost a fetish of the autonomy of the local congregation. The result was an almost total lack of interest in national affairs. They too were rent for years by a dispute about congregational singing. Such, in broad outline, were the causes of their decline. We must now turn to the details of their story.

[1] Murch, *A History of the Presbyterian and General Baptist Churches in the West of England*, pp. 74 ff.
[2] *ibid.*, p. 319.
[3] See Whitley, M.G.A., Vol. II, pp. 307 ff.

The first Assembly of the Particular Baptists in September 1689 was called by Kiffin, Knollys and Keach and four other ministers who, in July, sent out a letter, on behalf of the London churches, inviting the country churches to send two representatives, "one of the ministry and one principal brother of your congregation with him," to a general meeting in London. The letter suggested that the Assembly should concern itself with "giving fit and proper encouragement for the raising up of an able and honourable ministry for the time to come."[1] More than a hundred churches in England and Wales sent representatives. In the "Narrative of their Proceedings" they declare that "they disclaim all manner of superiority, or superintendency over the churches, having no authority or power to prescribe or impose anything upon the faith or practice of any of the churches of Christ, their whole intendment being to be helpers together of one another, by way of counsel and advice."[2] Even their advice is "not binding to any church till the consent of that church be first had, and they conclude the same among themselves." It was agreed to accept into membership those churches which practised open communion with close membership but not those which, like Bunyan's, had open membership. It was decided to establish a fund to help the weaker churches to maintain their ministers, to send preachers "where the Gospel hath or hath not yet been preached, and to visit the churches," and to assist ministerial candidates in attaining a knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.

Another subject dealt with was, "whether it be not expedient for churches that live near together, and consisting of small numbers, and are not able to maintain their own ministry, to join together for the better and more comfortable support of their ministry, and the better edification of one another?" The Assembly

[1] As early as 1675, when the Bill of Indulgence seemed to provide them with a favourable opportunity, most of the Particular Baptist ministers in London sent out a letter to the churches in England and Wales, inviting them to meet in London to devise means for "providing an orderly standing ministry in the church, who might give themselves to reading and study, so become able ministers of the New Testament." Perhaps the meeting which framed the Confession of 1677 was the result of this circular letter.

[2] Excerpts from the proceedings are to be found in Crosby, Vol. III, pp. 246 ff.

answered in the affirmative. It also discussed ways of dealing with persons who "will not communicate to the necessary expenses of the church, according to their ability." Excessive luxury in dress was denounced. "It is a shame for men to wear long hair or long periwigs, and especially ministers." The Assembly also endorsed the 1677 Confession of Faith, and agreed to meet again yearly. But by 1692 the attendance began to fall off, largely because, in those days of difficult travel, the local Associations provided handier means of fraternization and counsel. The Assembly of that year decided to divide itself. One half was to meet at Easter in Bristol (then the second city of the kingdom) and the other in London at Whitsuntide. The London meetings soon ceased and the Bristol meetings naturally became the Western Association. The Assembly of 1693 (held in Bristol) is interesting for two things. (1) It declared that only elders could administer baptism and the Lord's Supper, but it made an exception in the case of elders "called to the office by the suffrage of the church, who had not yet been ordained by the laying on of hands." (2) The old prejudice against an educated ministry cropped up and was tactfully dealt with in many phrases of which the following is typical. "The knowledge of tongues, moreover, is not essential, or absolutely necessary, to constitute a minister of the Gospel"; and yet "they dare not limit the Holy One, who bestows gifts for edification upon the learned, as well as upon the unlearned."

In Bristol, however, there was one man well ahead of the majority. Edward Terrill (1635-1686), a writing master at Bristol and a ruling elder of the Broadmead Church,[1] in his will dated June 3rd, 1679, disposed of his considerable property thus: some for the poor, some to support two deaconesses and the bulk to support a minister at the Broadmead Church, who should be well skilled in Hebrew and Greek and devote three half-days a week "to the instruction of young men, not exceeding twelve, members of any baptized congregation in or about Bristol, for two years at most." It is not easy to say who was the first Broadmead minister to begin training ministers under this bequest, but by 1720 effec-

[1] This church had a pastor, ruling elders, deacons and deaconesses.

tive work was begun, which is continued to this day at the Bristol Baptist College.

In 1704, an attempt was made by thirteen Particular Baptist churches in London to revive the London Association. It dealt with the current problems (Antinomianism, the training and maintenance of ministers) and declared that the imposition of hands at the ordination of elders and deacons was "an ordinance of Jesus Christ still in force."[1] But within ten years, the Association seems to have died a natural death. In 1714, however, Benjamin Stinton did his best to draw together all the Baptist ministers of London,[2] by establishing a ministerial society which met at the Hanover Coffee-house. The division between General and Particular Baptists again appeared; the Calvinists separated and established in 1724 their own society which continues to this day under the title "The Baptist Board." In 1717, the London Particular Baptists established a fund to assist needy ministers and to educate ministerial candidates. It continues to this day as the Particular Baptist Fund. It refused to co-operate with Arminians, and refused subscriptions from the Barbican Church on account of its Arian tendencies and also from the open-membership church at Pinners' Hall, though it accepted the money of the Hollis brothers, as they were baptized members of this church. The result was that in 1726, the Barbican Church started another fund for the same purpose but on a broader basis. As it drew most of its support from the General Baptists, it became known as the General Baptist Fund, so that to-day it helps both orthodox and unorthodox.[3]

Before its dissolution, the Hanover Coffee-house ministers' club did three useful things.[4] (1) It raised a fund to help some of the French refugees who had settled in London after the revo-

[1] See, for example, Ivimey, Vol. III, pp. 148 ff., 433 f., for details of typical Baptist ordinations in the early eighteenth century.

[2] Stinton was assistant and successor to his father-in-law, Benjamin Keach, at the Particular Church at Horsley Down. His funeral was conducted by a Particular Baptist minister in an Independent meeting-house and he was interred in a General Baptist burial ground.

[3] Ivimey, Vol. III, pp. 150 ff., 183 ff. Whitley, B.L., p. 54.

[4] See Ivimey, Vol. III, pp. 133 ff.

cation of the Edict of Nantes. (2) It declined a request from the Baptists of Burton, Northamptonshire, to send a learned minister to state the Baptist case in a public disputation with the Quakers. It advised both parties to seek "other methods which will be less offensive, and more informing to those who are in search of the truth." (3) It sent a letter to all the Baptist churches in London urging the rebuilding of the old baptistery at Horsley Down. For some years this had been the only baptistery in London and had been used by all the churches. It was on the wrong side of the river for many churches and too small to accommodate the numerous spectators. In 1716, the Barbican Church had repaired its meeting-house and constructed a new and elaborate baptistery, for which the Hollis family found the money, reserving to themselves the power of determining who should use it. A licence was issued to ministers who wished to use it and a charge of two shillings per person was made for the use of baptistery and baptismal robes.[1] A register was kept of the persons baptized and of the administrators. London ministers evidently found the conditions irksome and so proposed later in 1716 to repair the baptistery at Horsley Down. This project was carried through the next year, when the baptistery was enlarged and new dressing rooms built.

Mention has already been made of the pioneer attempts of Benjamin Keach to introduce the singing of hymns into congregational worship. As Crosby was his son-in-law, he provides us with abundant details of the controversy. He says of Keach:[2]

> Though he had very great success therein, yet it brought upon him much trouble and ill-will. When he was convinced that singing the praises of God was an holy ordinance, he laboured earnestly and with a great deal of prudence and caution, to convince his people thereto; and first obtained their consent to the practice of it at the conclusion of the sacrament of the Lord's supper,[3] and had but two of the brethren . . . that opposed him therein. . . . After his church had continued in this practice about six years, they further assented to practise the same on public thanksgiving days, and continued therein about

[1] Crosby (Vol. IV .pp. 166 ff.) prints the licence and describes the elaborate baptistery.

[2] Vol. IV, pp. 298–301.

[3] cf. Matthew, xxvi, 30.

fourteen years; and then by a regular act of the church, in a solemn manner agreed, to sing the praises of God on every Lord's day, excepting about five or six persons that dissented therefrom: and if I am not mistaken, was the first church of the Baptists that thus practised this holy ordinance. And so far was Mr. Keach, or the church, from imposing on the consciences of those few that dissented . . . that they agreed to sing when prayer was concluded after the sermon; and if those few who were not satisfied could not stay the time of singing, they might freely go out, and the church would not be offended at them . . . (but the few) drew over some others in the church to join with them, and wrought up their uneasiness to that pitch, that at last a separation ensued; and thereupon another church was founded on the same principles, singing only excepted.

The publication of Keach's hymn-book in 1691 caused a heated debate in the Assembly of 1692, which appointed a sub-committee to deal with the matter. It read a lesson in moderation to both parties to the dispute.[1] It is an indication that things were moving among the Particular Baptists that the second minister called in 1733 by the dissentients mentioned by Crosby made hymn-singing a condition of his acceptance, "with which they complied and do practise accordingly."[2] Keach's hymn-book, containing nearly three hundred hymns, was followed by the baptismal and sacramental hymns of Joseph Stennett, senior. In 1787, John Rippon (1750–1836) put out a hymn-book and later a tune-book, which were so frequently reprinted that they made him a wealthy man.

Antinomianism has always been the dark shadow cast by the more extreme forms of Calvinism. It may be defined as the belief that the moral law is not binding on Christians who are "under grace." Its beginnings may be traced in the apostolic age when it was denounced by the Apostle Paul. Any consistent Calvinistic theology must make faith a consequence and not a condition of election. By making man's depravity total and the divine grace irresistible, it denies the freedom of the human will and man's

[1] See H. Wheeler Robinson, *Life and Faith of the Baptists*, p. 49, for a modern account of the pamphlet war. He cites the following example of Keach's doggerel:

Our wounds do stink and are corrupt,
Hard swellings do we see;
We want a little ointment, Lord,
Let us more humble be.

[2] Crosby, Vol. IV, p. 301.

capacity to co-operate with that grace. By its doctrine of their final perseverance it teaches that the elect can never forfeit divine grace, however great and grievous the sins into which they fall. In the eighteenth century, however, many Particular Baptists became hyper-Calvinists and supralapsarians. The sublapsarians taught that God decreed the salvation of some and passed by others to their damnation after the fall of Adam. The supralapsarians placed the divine decree of election and reprobation before the fall of man and the creation of the world. For them the fall of man was decreed as a consequence of the double decree of election and reprobation. This scheme made God the author of evil and maintained that men were virtually called into existence by the will of God in order to be saved or in order to be damned.

Such a theology had a paralysing effect upon the preacher. The notion that for multitudes of men no salvation was either intended or provided in Christ, devitalized evangelistic preaching and effort, depriving men of any feeling of responsibility for extending the Kingdom of God. As early as 1611, Thomas Helwys had put his finger exactly on the spot when he wrote of Calvinism that it "makes some despair utterly as thinking there is no grace for them and that God hath decreed their destruction. And it makes others desperately careless, holding that if God have decreed they shall be saved then they shall be saved, and if God have decreed they shall be damned they shall be damned."[1] The first Particular Baptists had never allowed their Calvinism to abate their evangelical zeal. The title of Bunyan's tract, *Come and welcome to Jesus Christ*, expressed their point of view. But early in the eighteenth century a change came over them. They preached according to what Ivimey calls the "non-invitation, non-application scheme" and contented themselves with expounding doctrine. If Christ died not for all but only for the elect, it was useless to invite all to repent and believe in Him. The first Baptist minister to adopt the new style was John Skepp who, in 1710, settled at the Curriers' Hall Church. He

[1] Cited by Burgess, *op. cit.*, pp. 222 ff.

was so afraid of Arminianism and Pelagianism that he made no attempt to awaken the consciences of the unconverted, lest he should despoil God of the sole glory of their conversion.[1] Skepp's successor at Curriers' Hall, John Brine (1703–1765), took exactly the same line. "Even in sermons where the subjects . . . would have led him to address the unconverted, on the necessity of repentance and faith, there is not a syllable addressed to them on any topic."[2] John Gill (1697–1771), who was the pastor of a leading London church for over fifty years and was made a Doctor of Divinity by the Marischal College, Aberdeen, on account of his extensive rabbinical and other learning, reprinted one of Skepp's works and never addressed the ungodly. John Johnson (1706–1791) of Liverpool was a high-Calvinist who taught that faith is not a duty which God requires of man, but a grace which it is impossible to convert into a duty. Faith cannot, therefore, be required of any man and want of faith is no sin. It is not the soul of man which believes but the principle of grace within him. The business of ministers is not to inculcate moral duties but to preach the Gospel. On the basis of these views Johnson drew off a few Baptist churches into a sect which did not long survive. No Johnsonian congregation was reported in 1851. The withering effects of such hyper-Calvinistic teaching can easily be imagined. In 1753, John Brine was left with only thirty members. Happily not all Particular Baptist ministers were of this "high-and-dry" type; but hyper-Calvinism did its deadly work among Baptists, as well as among the Presbyterians and Independents.[3]

The men we have just mentioned have often been called Antinomians. This is an unfair judgment, as their own lives were blameless. But it is easy to see that their teaching was easily misinterpreted by their uneducated hearers, who, believing themselves to be elect, felt free to indulge in gross sins without fear of losing their salvation. It is extraordinary that

[1] See Ivimey, Vol. III, pp. 262 ff. [2] *ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 272.

[3] See *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, Vol. VI, pp. 389 ff. for Antinomianism among the Presbyterians and Independents; and Whitley's pamphlet *Calvinism and Evangelism in England, especially among Baptists.*

John Skepp did not realize that hyper-Calvinism had something to do with the pitiful story of David Crosley (1669–1744), his immediate predecessor in the pastorate of the Curriers' Hall Church. Crosley was born at Heptonstall in the West Riding of Yorkshire. He started life as a stonemason but he and his cousin gave themselves to the task of evangelizing the Pennines from the Rossendale Valley to Bradford and Rawdon, founding churches which eventually became Baptist. Crosley was a rolling-stone, lacking "the grace of settlement." After the Presbyterians had declined to ordain him, he was baptized at Bromsgrove in 1692 and returned to labour in the North at Barnoldswick and Tottlebank "behind the sands" of Morecambe Bay. Before long he was in London again and was ordained in 1703 as the pastor of the church in which Skepp succeeded him. His ministry was very successful, but rumours began to circulate that he was drinking too freely and behaving more than indiscreetly with women. The church examined the charges with meticulous care and Crosley was excommunicated in 1709. He returned to the North and resumed his labours there, but similar charges were brought against him. He regained his popularity, however, and at his death was pastor of the Bacup Church, and was keeping a school at a farm near Goodshaw. Crosley had a gift of fluent speech which was limpid clear. In his old age he held an audience of four thousand people for his funeral sermon of a murderer whom he visited in Lancaster gaol at his own request and who provided Crosley with the text. For the famous sermon of his earlier days on "Samson, a type of Christ," he secured a preface from George Whitefield. In that sermon, Crosley unconsciously revealed the weakness which beset him for many years, as he did when he spoke of "the poor Mary Magdalenes who are so ready to sit at Jesus' feet to hear his words through me." He was reputed to be one of the heaviest men in the county and for twenty years of his life weighed twenty stone.[1]

[1] For Crosley, see H. Wheeler Robinson, *Life and Faith of the Baptists*, pp. 47 ff. and Overend, *History of the Ebenezer Baptist Church, Bacup*, in which are printed letters of Crosley and his cousin, William Mitchell.

It is worth noting that the two wealthiest London churches were cold-shouldered by the Particular Baptists: the Barbican Church for its unorthodox tendencies and the Pinners' Hall Church because it was open membership. The building in Paul's Alley, Barbican, designed originally for a music-room, was occupied by a Baptist church gathered in Commonwealth times by John Gosnold, Master of Charterhouse. It was served by a succession of Calvinistic ministers but, in the early eighteenth century, it dispensed with the services of Joseph Stennett for preaching Calvinism. By far the wealthiest Baptist church in London, it maintained a library for the use of ministers. It desired to be neither Particular nor General and forbade its ministers to preach on the points of Calvinism. John Gale (1680–1722) was appointed to succeed Stennett as one of its assistant ministers. He came of a good family. His father had sent him to the University of Leyden, where in his nineteenth year he graduated Doctor of Philosophy. His learned reply to Wall's *History of Infant Baptism* brought him into public notice. He enjoyed the friendship of Lord Chancellor King, Bishop Hoadley, and other distinguished people. He was chairman of Whiston's *Society for Promoting Primitive Christianity*, and in the Salters' Hall controversy was, along with the pastor of his church, Joseph Burroughs, a non-subscriber. To support herself and her children, his widow opened a coffee-house, and was not the first or last Baptist minister's widow to do so. "In that situation her submission and obliging behaviour, and her easy compliance with her humble fortune, showed how much she merited a better." So remarks Ivimey,[1] after having made quite sure that his readers will suspect the worst of Gale's teaching. Gale's sermons, published in four volumes after his death, soon ran into a second edition. Evidently he did not interpret the church's injunction too strictly, for he attacked the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation as unscriptural.[2] Gale was

[1] Vol. IV, p. 217.
[2] Vol. I, p. 109. Gale often preached at Virginia Street and Deptford, both of which were General Baptist Churches.

followed at the Barbican by Isaac Kimber (1692–1755) who had been associated with the General Baptists. He edited *The Morning Chronicle* for some years and moved in literary circles. James Foster (1697–1753) followed Kimber. He wrote against the Deists but was himself a rationalistic Socinian. He was accounted the best preacher in London. The wits, free-thinkers, clergy, and persons of quality went to hear him. It was a proverbial saying that "those who had not heard Farinelli sing and Foster preach, were not qualified to appear in genteel society." The Marischal College, Aberdeen, made him a Doctor of Divinity. When he had Socinianised the Barbican Church, it was said that Gale "had laboured" and Foster had "entered into his labours." After these remarkable doctrinal fluctuations the church was dissolved in 1768.[1] Among those baptized by Foster at the Barbican was the eccentric William Whiston, the Anglican clergyman whose translation of Josephus has so long been in use.

After the Fire of London, the Hollis family acquired a long lease of the Glass House (built by some Huguenot refugees in the reign of Elizabeth) and re-named it Pinners' Hall. "Here they built a fine new hall with galleries in two tiers, and offices. Thomas Hollis found it a mine of wealth, for he let it five days a week for business purposes, so that it became known as Pinners' Hall. He let it on Sundays to two churches, on Saturdays to another, and then on Tuesdays for a series of Lectures. It also became the headquarters of the Particular Baptist Fund."[2] The Hollis family belonged to the open-membership church which met in the Hall. James Foster passed on from the Barbican to become the minister of this church, which he also led over to Socinian opinions. When the lease expired in 1778, the church disbanded.

The number of Particular Baptists who became Arians or Socinians was very small. Sayer Rudd, M.D., pastor of the Turners' Hall Church, was soon expelled by the Society of

[1] Gale, Kimber, and Foster are all noticed in the D.N.B.
[2] Whitley, B.L., 14. See also Pike, *Ancient Meeting Houses*, pp. 61 ff.

Ministers, to end his life as vicar of Walmer in 1757. His brother John, was also called to account by his church. Concerning the opinions of Nathaniel Hodges, the pastor of the Artillery Lane Church, we cannot be so certain. He was a non-subscriber at the Salters' Hall Controversy in 1719. Shortly after he left the ministry and, being a rich man, was knighted and made a justice of the peace for the county of Surrey. It has to be remembered that orthodoxy was not the only point at issue at Salters' Hall. Liberty of interpretation was also involved; and the non-subscribers disclaimed all sympathy with Arianism.

Robert Robinson (1735–1790) escaped being disciplined for his erroneous beliefs. A hairdresser's apprentice, converted by Whitefield, he became in 1759 the minister of a dispirited Baptist church in Cambridge, which had just lost its minister who was described as a "lord in his church, a tyrant in his family and a libertine in his life." As Robinson's stipend was only sixty-six shillings a quarter, he farmed at Chesterton, and added to his income by writing sermons for some of the Cambridge clergy. His success as a preacher was phenomenal. Members of the university and others who had never entered a Baptist meeting-house became his hearers. The undergraduates came to have their share of the fun, but Robinson knew how to deal with them. He also preached a great deal in the villages round Cambridge. The London ministers made arrangements for him to visit the British Museum regularly, with a view to his writing a history of the Baptists.[1] He conceived the enterprise on such a vast scale that years later all he could issue was his elaborate *Ecclesiastical Researches* and *A History of Baptism*. He does not appear to have been too happy among the London ministers who were busy paying court to the Whig aristocracy. "Well," he wrote, "the carnality of the whole disgusts me, and blessed be God Robinson can ramble with impunity, though in their esteem a kind of outlaw, a wild savage."[2] Robinson was a free-lance and rather eccentric. He never, for instance, prayed at the

[1] Details in Ivimey, Vol. IV, pp. 48 ff.
[2] I owe the quotation to Lincoln, *English Dissent*, 1763–1800, p. 55.

graveside, lest it should mislead children into the Popish practice of praying for the dead. It is generally supposed that he accepted Arian or Socinian opinions towards the end of his life. He died in Birmingham in the house of Priestley, whom he surprised by his ridicule of the doctrine of the Trinity. His last biographer, William Robinson, who later ministered to the same church and whose orthodoxy was unimpeachable, said:

> He was one of the most decided Unitarians of the age, but never a mere Humanitarian . . . No man has the right to call him a Socinian or Arian. He held apparently the indwelling hypothesis[1] to the end of his life, but became vague and confused in its application. He was like a noble vessel broken from its moorings, and drifting out to sea amidst fogs and rocks, without a compass or a rudder.[2]

Robinson's vast literary output now lies on library shelves untouched but two of his hymns will long survive: "Come, thou fount of every blessing" and "Mighty God, while angels bless Thee."

Another and very different Baptist minister who spent the whole of his working life in the Provinces was Benjamin Beddome (1717–1798). He was a Calvinist of the best type and for over fifty years the pastor of the Bourton-on-the-Water Church. Eager to win the young, he produced a Baptist Catechism "by way of question and answer." He had preached so often that he was able to "sketch his picture at the foot of the pulpit, to colour it as he was ascending, and, without turning his eyes from the canvas, in the same hour, to give it all the finish of a master." His hymn, "Father of mercies, bow Thine ear," will long be sung, though many others of his composition are no longer in use. In a neighbouring county, another man trained at Bristol, John Ash (1724–1779), was pastor for many years, at Pershore, where he conducted a school. His English Grammar ran into no fewer than thirteen editions and his Dictionary was twice printed. He was associated with Caleb

[1] See Colossians ii, 9. William Robinson's point was that his namesake was a Sabellian.

[2] *Select Works of Robert Robinson*, p. lxxvii.

Evans of the Bristol Academy in publishing a collection of hymns by many authors which was widely used among the Particular Baptists.

It was a calamity that, in London, Andrew Gifford (1700–1784) was ostracized by his brother-ministers. He was the son and grandson of Baptist ministers who lived and worked in Bristol. After being educated at the Tewkesbury Academy, and the Gresham College, be became an assistant at Nottingham and Bristol, being called to the Wild Street Church, London, in 1729. Within a few years the church was rent with a violent quarrel. A long repented sin of Gifford's youth became known to some of the members, who demanded his resignation. Gifford, with a considerable following, withdrew and built the Eagle Street Church (now the Kingsgate Church) and ministered there till his death. The London ministers excluded him from their Society and refused to preach at Eagle Street. Gifford himself preached the opening sermon from the text, "Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O God, art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy name is everlasting." By this time, Gifford was private chaplain to the learned Sir Richard Ellys, who introduced him into circles in which the Baptist ministers of that time rarely moved. Gifford enjoyed the personal friendship of the Speaker, the Lord Chancellor, and the Archbishop. He became known as an antiquarian and numismatist. George II purchased the greater part of his collection of coins. Gifford's contacts with learned and aristocratic circles secured him in 1757 the appointment of assistant librarian at the British Museum; but before that he had been made a freeman of the City of Edinburgh and a Doctor of Divinity by the Marischal College, Aberdeen. He bequeathed his books and other curios to the Bristol Academy, which thus came into possession of the only complete copy of Tyndale's New Testament known to exist. He had pleaded that a charter and endowment should be sought for the College but "the modesty of the present tutors would not permit them to forward so vast a design." It was a tragedy that a man so

much alive[1] and a church so prosperous and influential were boycotted by the Baptist ministers of London, whose attitude was probably reflected in what Ivimey, one of Gifford's successors at Eagle Street, said about another man: "The feelings and habits of a gentleman, unless rendered subservient to the edification of the church, by an humble attention to the wishes and necessities of the people of his charge, are unfavourable to the welfare of the churches."

In some ways John Collett Ryland (1723–1792) bridges the gulf between this period and the next. He was a Calvinist who was proof against the blandishments of Wesley's Arminian theology, but new thoughts were stirring in his headstrong, passionate nature. At the age of twenty he registered the following vow:

> If there is ever a God in heaven or earth, I vow, protest and swear in God's strength, or, that God permitting me, I'll find Him out, and I'll know whether He loves or hates me, or I'll die and perish, soul and body, in the pursuit and search.

He was then a student at Bristol under Bernard Foskett, to whom the Bourton-on-the-Water Church, under Beddome, had sent him. His vow reveals his lifelong interest in what used to be called Christian Evidences. Ryland was successively minister at Warwick and Northampton, in both of which places he supported himself by keeping a school, which towards the end of his life he moved to Enfield. The oft-told story of his silencing William Carey at the ministers' meeting in Northampton deserves repeating, as revealing the gruff old Calvinist. When Carey proposed as a topic for discussion the question whether the command given to the disciples to teach all nations was still binding, Ryland snapped out, "Young man, sit down, sit down. You're an enthusiast." It was Ryland who had terrified Robert Hall as a boy. The lad's father had brought

[1] *Vividus vultus, vividi oculi, vividae manus, denique omnia vivida,* were the words applied by Rippon to him when he preached his funeral sermon from the text, "Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back."

him to the school at Northampton and the schoolmaster thus addressed the father:

> Were I General Washington, I would call together all my brother officers. I would bare my arm and bid every man bare his, that a portion of blood might be extracted and mingled in one bowl, and swear by Him that sitteth on the Throne and liveth for ever and ever not to sheath the consecrated blade till the freedom of his country was achieved. . . . And if after this any one should turn coward or traitor, I should feel it a duty, a pleasure, a luxury, to plunge my weapon into that man's heart.

"Sir," said Hall in telling the story, "I trembled at the idea of being left with such a bloody-minded master"; but he admitted that he owed to his schoolmaster "his undying passion for liberty." Ryland was thinking in new terms and was on the democratic side, as indeed were most Baptist ministers, when the American War of Independence broke out. Ryland's bark was worse than his bite and it was just like him to deliver the oration at the graveside, when Gifford was buried.

In many respects the Baptist laymen of the eighteenth century were more interesting figures than the ministers. Two of them unfortunately stood apart from the general current of Baptist life. John Ward belonged apparently to Andrew Gifford's boycotted church and Thomas Hollis to the open-membership church at Pinners' Hall. John Ward (1679–1758) was the son of a Baptist minister. He served for a time as a clerk in the Navy Office but turned schoolmaster, preferring, as he said, "to converse with boys on the subjects of literature rather than transact the ordinary affairs of life among men." His name became known and his learning appreciated, and in 1720, he was appointed Professor of Rhetoric in the Gresham College, holding the post and living in his rooms there till his death. He was a vice-president of the Royal Society and of the Society of Antiquaries, and also one of the original trustees of the British Museum. Edinburgh University made him a Doctor of Laws. He published many books but a great deal of his material remains in manuscript at the British Museum. It is an intriguing sign of the variety of his accomplishments that he had a share in

designing the figures and inscriptions for the firework display, staged to celebrate the Peace of 1748. The trust he founded for the education of ministers at a university still does excellent work, but it is noteworthy that he established it quite independently of the churches.[1]

The Hollis family came from Rotherham and were the chief supporters of the Pinners' Hall open-membership church. Thomas Hollis (1659–1731), who paid for the baptistery at the Barbican Church, was a liberal supporter of the Particular Baptist Fund and is still remembered in the United States for his munificence to Harvard, where he founded two chairs and established exhibitions for undergraduates, with a preference for Baptists. Another Thomas Hollis (1720–1774) was a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, and a Fellow of the Royal Society. He travelled much on the Continent and gave books to the universities of Harvard, Berne, and Zürich, and the portraits of Newton and Cromwell to Trinity and Sidney Sussex Colleges, Cambridge. He edited Toland's "Milton" and the works of Algernon Sidney. In his day he was called "a republican." He had the cap of liberty embossed on the many books he gave away.[2]

A close friend of Nathaniel Hodges was Joseph Collet, for some years Governor of Madras. Collet's father, a wealthy dyer and a member of the Petty France Church, had been one of the original trustees of the Particular Baptist Fund. He gave his son a good education at the same school as Hodges. Collet inherited his father's dyeworks and the family moved to the Artillery Lane Church of which Hodges had become the pastor. Owing to the wars, the business came to grief and the creditors had to accept seven shillings and twopence in the pound, but Collet was determined that they should all be paid

[1] Ward's church connexion still remains in doubt. See *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. IV, pp. 1 ff., 63 ff., 172.

[2] Lincoln, *English Dissent*, 1763–1800, pp. 35, 275, will put the student on the track of further information about Hollis, who, according to Lincoln, "though never professedly a Dissenter, was a friend of Dissenters, a Whig, a supporter of America and of civil and religious liberty all the world over." See also D.N.B.

in full. Through the good offices of Gregory Page, a director of the East India Company and a member of the Devonshire Square Church, he secured an appointment as Governor of Bencoolen, a trading post in Sumatra. Leaving his four daughters in the care of friends, he sailed in 1711 but his ship was captured by the French. He got himself, the ship and its cargo released on ransom by means of bills payable in London. When these had been honoured by his friends, he resumed his voyage, and within six years had repaid the ransom and the debts on the family business. At Bencoolen he restored order, built a new fort, brought the local sultans to heel and set a good example to the Company's employees by refusing the loan of wives and daughters of the sultans. He had public prayers and a sermon every Sunday, the prayers being read by his secretary from the Book of Common Prayer, which on one occasion he used for the marriage of one of his councillors. His success led to his appointment as Governor of Madras—a post then worth a mint of money. He kept up his correspondence with Hodges, chaffing him on the fortunes he had inherited. Collet played the part of Governor extremely well and thoroughly enjoyed it. He went to church with great pomp, with the garrison lining the road, drums beating and colours flying, but he made no secret of the fact that he was a Baptist. He refused to stand godfather to a child and would not allow the Athanasian Creed to be used in church. He was not prepared, he said, to hear himself publicly cursed. "Being myself head of the Church, Liberty of Conscience flourishes here," he wrote. By the time he was forty-seven he had made enough money to provide a marriage portion of five thousand pounds each for his daughters, to start two nephews in life, to purchase a country estate and to stand for Parliament. He, therefore, retired in 1721. On reaching London he transferred his membership to the Barbican Church, recognizing in Gale a kindred spirit. He died in 1725, leaving fifty pounds each to Joseph Burroughs and Isaac Kimber. The inscription, drawn up by himself, on his tomb in Bunhill Fields, reveals his semi-Arian sympathies in the phrase, "the gift of the one only

supreme God the Father, by the ministration of his Son Jesus Christ."[1]

Another Baptist layman who accumulated a vast fortune was Thomas Guy (1645?–1724), the founder of Guy's Hospital. Educated at Tamworth he set up as a bookseller in London in 1668, specializing in the sale of Bibles. For some years he represented Tamworth in Parliament and built its town-hall. An active governor and supporter of St. Thomas's Hospital, he built a new hospital and endowed it with £200,000 which he had made out of selling his South Sea Stock at the right time. We still do not know of which London church Guy was a member.

Thomas Crosby was a schoolmaster on Horsley Down and a deacon of the church under the care of his brother-in-law, Stinton. The materials prepared by Stinton for a Baptist history passed into his hands. Crosby added to them and passed them on to Neal to use in his *History of the Puritans*. When Neal's book appeared, Crosby (to quote his own words) "was surprised to see the ill use Mr. Neal made of these materials." He thereupon resolved to write the history himself. It appeared in four volumes in 1738–1740. It was a pioneer work in which the facts were badly arranged and the distinction between General and Particular Baptists was ignored. Fortunately, copies of the Stinton Repository still exist. One is tempted to quote Crosby's advertisements of his boarding-school at the end of his first three volumes. They should be read by the curious.

During the eighteenth century the Gurney family comes into Baptist history. Thomas Gurney (1705–1770) was a clockmaker near Blackfriars Road, who in his *Brachygraphy* improved on William Mason's system of shorthand. His engagement at the Old Bailey was the first official appointment of a shorthand writer for the law-courts. He afterwards practised in other courts and the House of Commons. His son Joseph (1744–1815),

[1] See *The Private Letter Books of Joseph Collet*, with Introduction and Notes by H. H. Dodwell, and Appendices on Family History by Clara E. Collet. Collet was a friend of the Stennetts. In the *Works of Joseph Stennett* (London, 1732), Vol. IV, Poems, there is a dedicatory poem by Collet from Bencoolen. I owe this reference to Mr. E. A. Payne.

a deacon of the Maze Pond Church, improved his father's system and continued his official work, which included the trial of Warren Hastings. His son, William Brodie Gurney (1777–1855), was official reporter to Parliament from 1813. He was the first editor of the *Youth's Magazine*, founder, secretary, treasurer and president of the Sunday School Union, as well as treasurer of the Stepney College, the Baptist Missionary Society and the Particular Baptist Fund. His son Joseph (1804–1879) was also reporter to Parliament and a biblical scholar who issued *The Annotated Paragraph Bible* and *The Revised English Bible*.[1]

The middle of the eighteenth century marks the virtual disappearance of the Seventh-Day Baptist churches. Their numbers had never been considerable but they had several churches in London and the Provinces. By 1754, there was no Seventh-Day minister left, though ordinary Baptist ministers were willing to do double duty. Members of the remarkable Stennett family were consistently Seventh-Day Baptists for several generations. Shortly after Francis Bampfield's death, his church was reorganized by a prosperous physician, Edward Stennett (*d.* 1691). He resided at Wallingford Castle, which, as a former royal residence, was exempt from ordinary search warrants. His son Joseph (1663–1713), to whom he had given an excellent education, was ordained with laying on of hands as pastor of Bampfield's Seventh-Day church in London. It prospered greatly during his ministry but declined rapidly after his death. He also preached frequently for first-day churches and was, as we have seen, for a number of years, Sunday morning lecturer at the Barbican Church. It is said that many of the squibs privately circulated by the Whigs were from his pen. For his thanksgiving sermon, preached after the Battle of Blenheim, he received a gift from Queen Anne. Among his members was Mordecai Abbot (*d.* 1700) who, though Receiver-General of Customs under William III, never took the sacramental test. Some of Stennett's hymns were long in use. He projected a history of the Baptists but did not live to carry out his design. His son, also Joseph (1692–1758),

[1] Notices of the four Gurneys appear in the D.N.B.

was regarded as one of the most eloquent preachers of his time. Though for many years the pastor of the (First-Day) Little Wild Street Church, he was a consistent Sabbatarian, observing the seventh day as a day of rest. He declined the pastorate of the Mill Yard Church but conducted its Saturday morning services for some years. He was succeeded at Little Wild Street by his son, Samuel (1728–1795), who had among his hearers the philanthropist, John Howard. A man of education and polished manners, he moved with ease in society and was able to commend the dissenting cause in circles which had little personal acquaintance with it. King's College, Aberdeen, made him a Doctor of Divinity, following the lead of Edinburgh University, which had given his father the same degree on the recommendation of its Chancellor, the Duke of Cumberland. Other Seventh-Day Baptists of this period were Nathan Bailey (*d.* 1742), whose etymological dictionary of 1721 held the field for a century; and Sir William Tempest, Bart., F.R.S., who died in 1761.

The historic Mill Yard Church, which goes back to 1652, when it was Fifth Monarchist, still survives, kept alive by the endowment left to it by Joseph Davis and by the aid of American Seventh-Day Baptists. A few years ago it was meeting under the leadership of Lieutenant-Colonel T. W. Richardson, who conducted worship in his own house at Wood Green and in a hired hall at Canonbury. It still meets at Seven Sisters Road. Its motto has always been: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. xiv. 12). A Seventh-Day Baptist church had been planted in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1671. About thirty years ago the American Seventh-Day Baptists reported 73 churches and 6,000 members, as compared with 90 churches and 8,605 members in 1879. They are the main supporters of a university at Alfred Centre in New York State.

CHAPTER VII

Revival

By the middle of the eighteenth century the Methodist revival was in full swing, but unfortunately Baptists viewed it with suspicion, as did most of the old Dissenters.[1] One might have expected that the Arminianism of John Wesley would have appealed to the General Baptists; but infant-baptism stood in the way, and he had an unfortunate habit of referring to Baptists as Anabaptists. Thus we find Gilbert Boyce (1712-1800), Messenger of the Lincolnshire General Baptist churches, attacking Wesley on this point at length and in great detail. In his *A Serious Reply to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley* (1770), Boyce makes many excellent debating-points about baptism but he gives the modern reader the impression that he was more concerned to save the Baptist flag than to win religion's battle. Orthodox though he was, Boyce missed his chance of profiting by the great revival of religion; and naturally the General Baptist churches which were subsiding into Socinianism failed altogether to profit. Happily, however, the original General Baptist emphasis upon the universality of the redemption provided for mankind in Christ was revived; and, as a result, a new body of Arminian Baptists was founded. In this new fellowship two distinct streams mingled and to their story we now turn.

About 1741, David Taylor, a servant in the household of the Countess of Huntingdon, began to preach in the villages round her residence at Donnington Park, Leicestershire. Among his first converts was Samuel Deacon (1714-1812), a woolcomber at Ratby. In several villages round Barton Fabis societies of earnest

[1] See Payne, *The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England*, p. 80.

Christians were formed on Methodist lines. The converts formed themselves into a church at Barton in 1745 and built a small meeting-house. Having to register it, they called themselves Independents. Opposition was violent[1] but the movement spread. Other meeting-houses were erected in such places as Hinckley, Loughborough, and Melbourne (Derbyshire), but the different communities formed one society. Study of the New Testament convinced them that the scriptural mode of baptism was not by sprinkling but by immersion. They, therefore, placed in their meeting-house a large tub in which their infants were dipped. After some years they became convinced that there was no more scriptural authority for the baptism of infants than for sprinkling. For infant-baptism they, therefore, substituted a dedication service "and brought their infants, in the time of public service, to the minister: who, taking them in his arms, pronounced an affectionate benediction on them; using, on this occasion, the words in which Aaron and his sons were instructed to bless the children of Israel."[2] They next determined to adopt believers' baptism by immersion but knew no Baptist minister who could baptize them. Two of their ministers baptized each other, and they baptized between sixty and seventy of their followers in November 1755. As not all the members of the society were baptized, they continued for some time on the open-communion principle. In 1760, their number had so increased that they divided into five independent and distinct societies, which kept up fraternal relations with each other, holding monthly meetings of ministers and quarterly conferences. They were mostly poor, labouring folk who thought nothing of walking twenty or thirty miles to hear their preachers, who were unpaid and untrained. Thus they continued in isolation, apparently ignorant of the existence of other Baptists holding similar views, until Gilbert Boyce and Dan Taylor made contacts with them some years later.

Dan Taylor (1738–1816) was born at Northowram, near Halifax, and is said to have gone to work with his father in the mine at

[1] Taylor, Vol. II, pp. 3 ff. [2] *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 30. (Numbers vi. 22 ff.)

the age of five. As a youth he was drawn to the Methodists and walked miles to hear the Wesleys and Whitefield, and often tramped across the moors to Haworth to hear its evangelical and eccentric incumbent, William Grimshaw. In due course, Taylor was confirmed by the bishop of the diocese but, at the age of nineteen, joined the Methodists, who desired him to become one of their accredited preachers; but his views on discipline did not square with Wesley's. He continued his work as a miner but studied Greek, Latin, and Hebrew in his spare time. In 1762, he left the coal-mine and settled as the minister of a small group of seceders from Methodism who worshipped together at Wadsworth, near Hebden Bridge. To support himself he opened a school in the hamlet. The presence of Particular Baptist churches in the neighbourhood raised in his society the question of the propriety of infant-baptism. Taylor studied the subject and read Wall's famous *History of Infant Baptism*, which convinced him, he said, that there was no scriptural foundation for the practice. John Slater and some others embraced the same opinion, and Taylor applied to several Particular Baptist ministers to baptize them. All refused. Some said that they could not conscientiously baptize an Arminian; others that their churches would not permit them. One of them told him there were Arminian Baptists in Lincolnshire and advised him to apply to them. On February 11, 1763, Taylor and Slater set out on foot for Lincolnshire. One night in the darkness they found themselves lost in a field completely surrounded by water, so they slept on a hay-stack. The next day at an inn they heard that there was a General Baptist church at Gamston, Nottinghamshire, through which they had passed three hours before. They went back and introduced themselves to the minister who baptized Taylor in the river on February 16, 1763. They returned to Wadsworth and won others to Baptist views. What he had heard from the minister at Gamston decided Taylor to attend the Assembly of the Lincolnshire General Baptists at Lincoln in the following May. He was received kindly by Gilbert Boyce and made a firm friend of William Thompson, minister of the Boston Church, who returned to Yorkshire with Taylor and formed the

Wadsworth society into a duly constituted church—the first General Baptist church in Yorkshire. A little later, in July 1763, Gilbert Boyce came up and ordained Taylor as its minister. Soon a meeting-house was erected, for which Taylor dug some of the stone and carried the pulpit from the old building on his back.

Taylor assiduously cultivated close relations with his new-found Lincolnshire friends, constantly preached in their churches, and attended the General Assembly in London; but he was destined soon to be disillusioned. He observed with regret their tenacious adherence to old customs and he deplored their doctrinal laxity. "They degraded Jesus Christ, and He degraded them" was his succinct explanation of the much discussed question of "the decay of Christianity among the baptized churches." Disputes between the orthodox and unorthodox in the Association were painfully frequent. For many years Gilbert Boyce was Messenger in Lincolnshire, but his conservatism made it impossible for him to arrest the decline. The General Baptists had fallen so low that in 1766 they let their meeting-house in Lincoln to the Particular Baptists on the condition that they kept it in repair and allowed General Baptists to preach in it, "when they could find opportunity."[1] Careful as ever of forms, they added a third condition: none was to preach therein save baptized believers who had been regularly called to the work of the ministry.

Taylor found much more congenial company in the churches of the Leicestershire evangelical movement, with which he had been brought into touch on one of his journeys to Lincolnshire. In 1765, he introduced them to the notice of the Lincolnshire Association. Several attempts were made to induce them to join it, and, in 1766, Boyce went to Loughborough to see what could be done. The Leicestershire Baptists refused, however, to consort with churches containing so many holding unorthodox views. A new idea now shaped itself in the mind of Taylor. He began to consider the project of uniting the Leicestershire churches in a new Connexion with such General Baptist churches throughout the country as remained orthodox. Accordingly in the autumn of

[1] Taylor, Vol. II, p. 113.

1769, a preliminary conference was held at Lincoln between Taylor and Thompson on the one hand, and several of the Leicestershire ministers on the other. It was decided to form a new body of General Baptists and to hold its first meeting in London while the General Assembly was in session, and representatives of the old General Baptists were accessible. Boyce did all in his power to close the breach and pleaded hard with Taylor to desist from his scheme, but the Yorkshireman was adamant. On June 6, 1770, the New Connexion of General Baptists[1] was founded in the meeting-house in Church Lane, Whitechapel, of one of the oldest General Baptist churches in London. There were present, in addition to Taylor and William Thompson, representatives from the Midland churches, two London churches, two Lincolnshire churches and a few small churches in Kent and Essex. They stated that their design was "to revive experimental religion or primitive Christianity in faith and practice." To indicate their doctrinal position they drew up and signed Six Articles.[2] The one on the Person and Work of Christ says: "We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is God and man, united in one person: or possessed of divine perfection united to human nature, in a way which we pretend not to explain, but think ourselves bound by the Word of God firmly to believe: that He suffered to make a full atonement for all the sins of all men . . . . " On the previous day those who belonged to it sent a deputation to the General Assembly to take respectful leave of their former associates and to explain the reasons for the steps they had taken. Thus arose the New Connexion of General Baptists. It was obviously a child of the Methodist Revival, and manifested two Methodist characteristics: strong evangelical zeal and strong corporate feeling. The name chosen was to make it clear that it was Arminian in doctrine, but "New Connexion" was added to differentiate it from the old General Baptists who had virtually become Unitarian.

The General Assembly was so disturbed by the announcement of

[1] Its first minute describes them as "Free-Grace General Baptists." This title was dropped in deference to the wishes of the General Assembly.

[2] Printed in Taylor, Vol. II, pp. 139 ff.

the secession that it adjourned after passing a single resolution deploring the breach. But Daniel Dobell, Messenger in Kent, and Gilbert Boyce in Lincolnshire acted promptly, and used their influence to bring back their erring churches into the Assembly, reclaiming them all except that at Boston. But the Midland churches and Taylor's church in Yorkshire remained firm and the New Connexion met year by year. Boyce made frequent attempts to win them over. His efforts were unsuccessful because he would not abate his objections to congregational singing or abandon the tabu on eating blood; and the New Connexion refused to concede that the Messenger's office and the laying on of hands on the newly baptized were of divine institution. In the meantime the New Connexion continued to prosper and was joined by some of the old General Baptist churches which retained their evangelical tone. The old General Baptist church at Friar Lane, Leicester, was revived under the leadership of one of Samuel Deacon's sons. "An endowment preserved the shadow of a church. An infirm old man, of the name of Green, who lived at Earl Shilton, then enjoyed the property, as nominal elder: and preached five or six times a year to the few who chose to hear him."[1] New churches were founded in the Midlands at Nottingham, Derby, and elsewhere, and others in Yorkshire under Taylor's vigorous leadership. A hymn-book was provided and proposals made for an academy for training ministers. The New Connexion was carefully organized, with an annual meeting of delegates which was always called an Association, and with district conferences. An attempt was also made to supply periodical literature. Sunday schools were encouraged and a fund for aged ministers commenced. In 1816, the General Baptist Missionary Society was formed, whose secretary for many years was J. G. Pike, author of *Persuasives to Early Piety*. Its foundation had been mooted as early as 1802,[2] but it was thought that the resources of the Connexion were unequal to such a venture. The first missionaries, Bampton

[1] Taylor, Vol. II, p. 162.

[2] Naturally the feeling was strong that General Baptists, with their belief in a universal Redemption, could not lag behind their Particular brethren who had founded their Missionary Society in 1792. See below, p. 165.

and Peggs, arrived in India in 1821, where they consulted Carey, Marshman, and Ward, and on their advice settled at Cuttack in Orissa, winning their first convert from Hinduism in 1828. By 1817, the New Connexion could claim 6,846 members in 70 churches.[1] Half of these churches, and more than half of the members, were in the Midlands. The North could claim only 741 members and 8 churches, but Dan Taylor was the leader of the Connexion, presiding for years at the meeting of its Annual Association. He had moved from Hebden Bridge to Halifax and, in 1785, went to London to become John Brittain's assistant and successor at Church Lane, Whitechapel. His removal was debated long and earnestly by the New Connexion, which at length decided that, on the whole, it appeared likely "to be for the glory of God and the good of mankind, that brother D. Taylor remove to London." A wagon, lent by a friend, carried him and his family of nine children and his household stuff to London in eight days. The old London church knew that Taylor disapproved of the imposition of hands on the newly baptized, but was satisfied when it learned that he had no objection to another person performing the rite. After Brittain's death, the church decided that those who conscientiously declined the practice should not, on that account, be refused admission to the Lord's Supper. From London, Taylor continued his leadership of the New Connexion, became the head of its academy, and constantly toured the country in its interests.

For a time during his residence in London Taylor regularly attended the Assembly of the old General Baptists, as the representative of the Leicestershire Association, as the New Connexion is always styled in the Assembly's minutes. He even acted as its chairman and took its money for a church he had founded in Burnley. His actions naturally led Gilbert Boyce to persist in his efforts at reunion till his death at an advanced age in 1800. It is difficult to see what Taylor's motives were; and the historians of the New Connexion gloss over these curious facts. Perhaps his aim was to secure for the New Connexion all evangelical churches

[1] Taylor, Vol. II, p. 452.

seceding from the Assembly. He could with propriety say that the Assembly, either officially or as a whole, had never committed itself to Unitarian opinions, even though many of its members advocated these views. In 1803, however, Taylor finally withdrew from the Assembly which, two years before, had unanimously welcomed into its fellowship William Vidler (1758–1816), an avowed Unitarian and an advocate of Universal Restoration. Thereafter the two General Baptist bodies followed widely diverging paths. The old Assembly may now drop out of our story, having become virtually Unitarian. It still meets regularly and retains its old title for legal purposes, but it has no connexion with present-day Baptists.[1] At various dates the churches in membership with it relinquished baptism by immersion. Thus, for example, the ancient General Baptist church at Horsham, now called "Free Christian," has a baptistery which was last used about 1849. For a short time admission to church-membership was effected by imposition of hands, but that rite is no longer used.[2]

Dan Taylor's character has been frankly sketched by his brother and biographer.[3] He was obviously a tough, fearless, plain-spoken Yorkshireman, with "a pertinacity which bordered on obstinacy." He was inspired with "an unconquerable abhorrence of all trick, subterfuge or policy, (which) led him openly to avow and directly to pursue the objects at which he aimed." Disdaining the apostolic injunction to be "all things to all men," his life in the London church was no bed of roses, but he never knew when he was beaten. The church, we are told, was "much distracted with intestine commotions." When it reduced his stipend, he opened a bookshop. Yet, on occasion, he could be accommodating. Rejecting himself the tabu on the eating of

[1] John Deacon of Leicester attended for three more years after 1803, and round about 1870 deputations from each body attended the sessions of the other, but there were always protests from some in the New Connexion, and the practice was brought to an end. See, for example, *The General Baptist Magazine*, Vol. LXXV, pp. 190 ff. for a typical letter from J. C. Means inviting New Connexion brethren to the Assembly and the Lord's Supper, "catholic, not denominational." The date is 1873. See also pp. 286 and 439.

[2] *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. IV, p. 191.

[3] Adam Taylor, *Memoirs of the Rev. Dan Taylor*, pp. 288 ff.

blood, he nevertheless abstained from it, for the sake of weaker brethren. When he lost his first wife and no one else was able to do it, he preached the funeral sermon, remarking, "though I deliberately class her among the best of wives, yet she would certainly have been a better wife, if she had had a better husband." He was a greatly overworked man who, as he said, had more work than he knew how to perform "with any degree of decency." He carried the New Connexion on his own back. He had done it so long that, in his old age, he could not face the idea of giving anything up. "Having been for half a century regarded by most of his connections as an oracle, he naturally concluded that he must be right." It is said that, on a moderate computation, he travelled twenty-five thousand miles preaching the Gospel and confirming the churches, preached twenty thousand sermons, took part in thirty-eight ordinations, attended fifty-three associations and probably two hundred conferences, published nearly fifty books and pamphlets and wrote a dozen circular letters. In his will he solemnly charged his executors to conduct his funeral "with the strictest economy and as little expense as possible, consistent with decency; particularly that there be no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon." The old man was carried to his grave in Bunhill Fields as simply as his forebears had been carried to theirs on the spurs of the Pennines. His Yorkshire friends had written his character at the time he left Halifax. Intending to pay him a compliment, and hinting that he might not find London all he expected, they had said that he was "so hard as to be able to get through anything that could be gotten through."

Compared with the old Assembly, the Association of the New Connexion had a new-fashioned air. It was much more alive to the needs of the time and planted churches in the towns which were expanding or rising under the influence of the Industrial Revolution, particularly in the lace and hosiery towns of the Midlands and the woollen and cotton towns of Yorkshire and Lancashire. It knew how to appeal to the working classes. Yet, in its earliest years, it had its oddities, which are best explained

as arising out of the persistent tendency of the Sect-type of Christianity to separate itself from the world. This may be seen from the following decisions[1] of the annual Association on questions submitted to it for guidance. It was adjudged wrong to receive into church-fellowship a person whose employment required him to be engaged in secular business every Lord's Day till one o'clock (1828). Marriage with an unbeliever was discouraged but not made an offence meriting exclusion (1829). It was "contrary to Scripture to invite unconverted and immoral persons to take the lead in singing" (1832). It was declared unscriptural and anti-christian for a church-member to join the "Orange Clubs, Ancient Druids, Odd Fellows, or any other secret orders that of late have so much prevailed" (1835). The keeping of beer-shops by church-members was forbidden (1837). The monthly Conference of the Midland churches in 1783, disapproved of sick-clubs and thought that the church ought to make provision for its sick members.[2] It also decided that it was unlawful to use musical instruments in the congregation. In 1790, it decided that it was the duty of every Christian to refrain from fox-hunting, as "it was a waste of precious time and expense ill-applied, and a gratification of carnal nature, and cannot be done without injuring the property of others." This in the Midland shires! The old General Baptist regard for proper order appears in the following decisions of the Association. In some cases of necessity it may not be improper for a minister of the Gospel, who administers the ordinance of baptism, to administer the Lord's Supper, though unordained (1794). Ordination to the deacon's office "certainly confers no right" to administer the Lord's Supper (1810). "It is unscriptural for an unordained person to officiate as pastor" (1828).[3]

These decisions must not, however, be interpreted as suggesting that there was any spirit of clericalism in the New Connexion. The rights of the laity and the autonomy of the local churches

[1] See Wood, *A Condensed History of the General Baptists of the New Connexion*, p. 281.

[2] The minutes are printed in *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, Vol. V, pp. 121 ff.

[3] Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

were safeguarded, as is usual in the voluntary type of Christianity. "The first rules were drafted by ministers alone, who advised that the Association should be open only to ministers and elders; but the separate churches made steady efforts to secure local control by the whole body of local members."[1] In 1817, the basis of representation on the Association was settled in such a way that the pastors were far outnumbered by the lay delegates. Writing of this time, Adam Taylor says:[2]

> The churches composing the New Connection of General Baptists were, in their discipline, strictly congregational. . . . They believed that each society was competent to manage its own concerns; and allowed of no foreign control, not even from their own conferences or association. The executive power of a church, they conceived to be lodged in the members regularly assembled. . . . And, while they disclaimed all external authority, they were equally jealous of undue internal influence: holding their rights as church members sacred against the encroachment of their own officers.

In 1838, a new constitution was adopted,[3] which carefully preserved the independence of the churches but provided that the management of the home and foreign missions, the academy, and of some publications should be the responsibility of the Association. Otherwise it was to deal with only such matters as were referred to it by the conferences, churches or individuals. An advisory committee to report on ministers seeking admission to the Connexion was set up, which was composed of three ministers and three laymen. No joint function, peculiar to themselves, was assigned to the ministers.

We turn now to the Particular Baptists who were still separated from their General brethren by an impassable gulf. Upon them, too, the Evangelical Revival had at first but little effect. The Arminianism of Wesley prevented any relations between him and the Calvinistic Baptist ministers. In answer to him, Gill wrote a defence of predestination and final perseverance. As late as 1830, Ivimey could speak of Wesley as "very far inferior" to Whitefield "as to the correctness of his religious

[1] E.R.E. Vol. IV, p. 28.
[2] Taylor, Vol. II, p. 468.
[3] Printed in Wood, *op. cit.*, pp. 276 ff.

sentiments."[1] Of the Calvinistic Whitefield he speaks more warmly but admits that in the middle of the eighteenth century the Particular Baptists and other Dissenters were complaining of his "Arminian dialect" and "semi-Pelagian addresses."[2] Among the Baptists Whitefield had only one steady friend: the lonely Andrew Gifford attended the stone-laying of the Tabernacle in Tottenham Court Road, preached in it, and edited a memorial volume of Whitefield's sermons. As a result the London Particular Baptist churches were less touched by Whitefield's influence than the Colonies of Georgia, Virginia, Pennsylvania and New England.[3] Obviously new leaders had to arise before the Evangelical Revival could cut for itself channels of influence among the Particular Baptists. Fortunately new men with new ideas were forthcoming. These men revived the life and work of the Associations, pressed for modifications of doctrine, and for the provision of an educated ministry.

The first stirrings of new life, after the winter of hyper-Calvinism, appeared in the Midlands. In 1770, the Northamptonshire Association, which then included several counties, put out a Circular Letter which said:

> Every soul that comes to Christ to be saved from hell and sin by him, is to be encouraged . . . The coming soul need not fear that he is not elected, for none but such would be willing to come and submit to Christ.

Nine years later, Robert Hall, senior (1728–1791), preaching for the same Association at College Lane, Northampton, took for his text "Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take out the stumbling block out of the way of my people." In response to pressing demands, Hall expanded his sermon into his *Help to Zion's Travellers* (1781), The sub-title reveals its purpose: "an attempt to remove various stumbling-blocks out of the way, relating to doctrinal, experimental and practical religion." Hall said, "the way to Jesus is graciously laid open for everyone who chooses to come to him." The book became a classic in Baptist

[1] Vol. III, p. 290. [2] *ibid.*, p. 280.
[3] cf. Whitley, B.L., p. 56; *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. V, pp. 30 ff.

circles at home and in America. It came into the hands of William Carey who later said, "I do not remember to have read any book with such raptures."[1] Ivimey did not exaggerate when he said that he considered the year 1779 was "the commencement of a new era in the history of our denomination."[2] Robert Hall, senior, was a Northumbrian who, in 1753, settled for the rest of his life as the pastor of the church in the village of Arnesby, near Leicester. His stipend was a mere pittance so he cultivated a small farm. "I have found my heart," he said, "so united to the people that I never durst leave them, though I often thought I must. . . . It appeared pretty clear to myself and my wife that we were where God would have us be." Andrew Fuller said of him that he "turned topics, which in the hands of others would have furnished barren speculation only, into materials for devotion and prayer. . . . It would be difficult to conceive a human mind more completely purged from the leaven of pride or of envy . . . eminently skilled for imparting advice . . . he never made advice a disguise for arrogance, or an engine of rule, nor ever presumed to think himself affronted if his counsels were not followed."[3]

Among those who were struggling against the evil tendencies of hyper-Calvinism, Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) stood out. He was the man who dealt the mortal blow to the system which held that it was impossible for any but the elect to embrace the Gospel and that it was therefore useless to invite the unconverted to put their trust in Christ. The son of a small Cambridgeshire farmer, Fuller joined the Soham Church at the age of sixteen and was shortly to have an experience which left its mark on him for life. In view of all it meant to him and, indeed, to the whole denomination, it is best given in his own words:[4]

But in the autumn of the same year (1770) an unhappy affair occurred in the church, which occasioned a breach between our pastor, Mr. Eve, and the people which terminated in his leaving them; and what rendered it the more

[1] His carefully annotated copy is now in the library of Bristol College. Carey often walked twenty miles to hear Hall preach.

[2] Vol. IV, p. 41.

[3] Cited by Ivimey, Vol. IV, pp. 606 ff.

[4] Ryland, *Life and Death of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, pp. 37 ff.

afflicting to me, I was much concerned in it. The case was this: one of the members having been guilty of drinking to excess I was one of the first who knew of it. I immediately went and talked to him, as well as I could, on the evil of his conduct. The answer was, "He could not keep himself; and that though I bore so hard upon him, I was not my own keeper." At this I felt indignant, considering it as a base excuse. I therefore told him that he *could* keep himself from such sins as these, and that his way of talking was merely to excuse what was inexcusable. I knew not what else to say at that time; yet the idea of arrogating to be my own keeper seemed too much. He however was offended, and told me that I was young, and did not know the deceitfulness of my own heart. Well, I went and told my pastor, who highly commended me, and said, "We certainly could keep ourselves from open sins. We had no power (he observed) to do things spiritually good; but as to outward acts, we had power both to obey the will of God, and to disobey it."

The business soon came before the church, and the offender was unanimously excluded. . . . But this affair being disposed of, the abstract question of the power of sinful men to do the will of God, and to keep themselves from sin, was taken up by some of the leading members of the church. . . . They readily excused me, as being a babe in religion; but thought the pastor ought to have known better, and to have been able to answer the offender without betraying the truth. They alleged that the greatest and best of characters, as recorded in Scripture, never arrogated to themselves the power of keeping themselves from evil, but constantly prayed for keeping grace; . . . in short, that though we are altogether blameworthy for our evil propensities, yet if they were restrained or conquered, it was altogether to be ascribed to God, and not to us. . . .

On the other hand, the pastor distinguished between internal and external power. He allowed that men had no power of themselves to perform anything spiritually good; but contended that they could yield external obedience and keep themselves from open acts of sin. . . .

In these disputes I continued for some time on the side of my pastor; but after a few months I felt difficulties on the subject which I could not answer, and which rendered me unhappy. I perceived that some kind of power was necessary to render us accountable beings. If we were like stocks or stones, or literally dead, like men in a burying ground, we could with no more propriety than they be commanded to perform any duty: if we were mere machines there could be no sin chargeable upon us. Yet, on the other hand, the scriptures . . . represent the godly as crying to heaven for preservation from evil, ascribing all the good that was in them to Him who worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure. I prayed much, and laboured hard to solve this difficulty. . . .

In October 1771, our pastor, Mr. Eve, left us. I loved him, and he loved

me, and took it hard that I had in some respects changed my views. . . . I never look back upon these contentions but with strong feelings. They were to me the wormwood and gall of my youth: my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me . . . yet they were ultimately the means of leading my mind into those views of divine truth, which have since appeared in the principal part of my writings . . . and if I have judged or written to any advantage since, it was in consequence of what I then learned by bitter experience.

Fuller served the pastorless church as best he could and, in 1774, he was ordained as its minister by Robert Hall of Arnesby. His stipend was £13 per annum. He also received £3 a year for preaching in a neighbouring village, and the London Baptist Fund gave him £5 a year. To keep himself and his family, he opened a shop and later a school, but both ventures seem to have been unsuccessful. Moreover, the people, still infected with hyper-Calvinism, "were inclined to find fault with his ministry, as it became more searching and practical, and as he freely enforced the indefinite calls of the Gospel."[1] This compelled Fuller to systematize his views and he wrote his *The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation*. The church at Kettering called him, but it was years before he could make up his mind to leave Soham. At length, in 1783, he was inducted and frankly declared his point of view in the confession he made of his faith. He repudiated Arminianism and Socinianism ("if we are such great sinners, we need a great Saviour, infinitely greater than the Socinian Saviour"); declared that he believed the doctrine of reprobation to be "nothing more than the divine determination to punish sin in certain cases in the person of the sinner"; asserted the necessity of the agency of the Holy Spirit in conversion; and then boldly declared:[2]

I believe it is the duty of every minister of Christ plainly and faithfully to preach the Gospel to all who will hear it; and as I believe the inability of men to spiritual things to be wholly of the *moral*, and therefore of the criminal kind, and that it is their duty to love the Lord Jesus Christ and trust in him for salvation though they do not; I therefore believe free and solemn addresses,

[1] Ryland, *op. cit.*, pp. 71 ff.

[2] *ibid.*, p. 106.

invitations, calls, and warnings to them to be not only *consistent*, but directly *adapted*, as means, in the hand of the Spirit of God, to bring them to Christ. I consider it as a part of my duty which I could not omit without being guilty of the blood of souls.

Fuller now had to face the question whether he should publish the book he had written expounding his views. His modesty made him hesitate; and he knew how bitterly he would be attacked in certain quarters. After several months of agonizing doubt, he walked to Northampton and put his work into the printers' hands. It appeared in 1785, and the followers of Gill and Brine lost no time in replying. Among Fuller's most insistent opponents was John Martin,[1] pastor of the church in Grafton Street, Westminster—the man who had written the Circular Letter of the Northamptonshire Association in 1770. Martin reiterated the point that if faith was a gift it could not be a duty. His one question was: "Will any man tell me that it is my duty to do that without the Divine assistance which I can only do with?" Fuller remarked of Martin, "When he lifted up his feet, he was always careful to put them down again in the same place." Fuller, who had been careful to guard the main points of Calvinism, including the doctrine of a particular redemption, found himself between two fires. The Arminian Baptist, Dan Taylor, pressed him with the point that universal invitations to repent and believe the Gospel are a mockery unless provision is made in the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of all men. But Fullerism, as it came to be called, made headway and brought to an end the reign of hyper-Calvinism among the great majority of Particular Baptist ministers and churches. "Had matters gone on but a few years, the Baptists would have become a perfect dunghill in society," said Fuller in his forthright fashion.

In Kettering, Fuller was in touch with the leaders of the Northamptonshire Association, all of whom were lamenting the decline of religion in the churches. In 1784, John Sutcliff of Olney had persuaded the Association to issue a call to the churches to establish monthly prayer-meetings for the revival

[1] See D.N.B.

of religion.[1] The next year, John Ryland, of College Lane, Northampton, could say to Fuller that there "was scarcely anything worth the name of religion left upon the earth." But these men persisted in their prayers. Whenever the opportunity presented itself, they gathered with other ministers, till at length one man, William Carey, who had been on the fringe of the group, became its centre. The divine answer came in 1792 with the foundation of the Particular Baptist Missionary Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen. The story cannot be re-told here of how thirteen men made the beginning and contributed £13 2s. 6d. On that day, Baptists were leading the whole Church of Christ. Carey was not the first to go to India as a missionary, but, as Latourette says,[2] Carey began "a new era in Protestant missions, not only in India, but also in the entire world." And Carey would have been the first to acknowledge that the fire he kindled was taken from other altars. From Fuller's teaching he drew the inescapable inference that, if it was the duty of all men to repent and believe the Gospel, it was the duty of those entrusted with it to carry it into all the world.

Fuller remained the secretary of the Missionary Society from its foundation to the day of his death. His labours on its behalf were herculean. "Fuller lived and died a martyr to the Mission."[3] He attended to its correspondence and made frequent journeys to collect funds for it, aiming at getting an average of a pound for every mile he travelled, and relying on an unvarnished tale simply told. "At first he met with many rebuffs; and he was grieved with the want of greater zeal for the cause of God, that he sometimes retired from the more public streets of London into the back lanes, that he might not be seen by other passengers, to weep for his having so little success."[4] The other members of the committee learned to lean on his judgment and, says Ryland, "we scarcely ever had cause to regret a compliance with his

[1] For the story of the Prayer Call of 1784 and its remarkable influence, see *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. XI, pp. 67 ff.
[2] *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. III, p. 281.
[3] Morris, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, p. 49.
[4] Ryland, *op. cit.*, pp. 248 ff.

advice."[1] And all the time Fuller was writing on theological subjects, such as Deism, Socinianism, Sandemanianism, etc. Indeed it may be said that he was the soundest and most creatively useful theologian the Particular Baptists have ever had. A self-taught man, with no gifts of style and little technical learning, he had real power as a thinker, and "with a terrier-like tenacity, he kept hold on what he deemed the error of his opponent, and shook it to death."[2] His mind was masculine. He had a healthy contempt for barren speculations, for old and tiresome customs, and for all forms of vanity or conceit. "But to the modest and diffident," says Ryland,[3] "I never knew him otherwise than tender. He was not a man, however, to be brow-beaten and overborne, when satisfied of the goodness of his cause; nor could he be easily imposed upon by any one." When Brown University, Rhode Island, sent him the diploma conferring upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity, he pleasantly remarked, "Now I must learn Latin in order to read it." He never quite approved of the title "Reverend," though he did not go so far as Robert Robinson, who said that he wondered that any man could be so silly as to call him "Reverend," or Abraham Booth for whom it was "a species of profaneness to be so denominated."[4] To the consideration of every question he brought his sturdy common-sense.[5] Tall, stout and muscular, he had been a famous wrestler in his youth and seldom met a stout man without casting over him an appraising eye. Of fear he knew nothing. When his sleep was disturbed by disorderly persons in the street at Kettering, he would get up and quell the disturbance. Some of the rustic habits of his early years remained. He deemed it a luxury to eat flesh more than once a day and he could work in a room where the other members of the family were sitting at their tasks. "He had no idea of ease or rest", says one

[1] *op. cit.*, p. 252.
[2] Stoughton, *History of Religion in England*, Vol. VI, p. 373.
[3] *op. cit.*, p. viii.
[4] Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 50 f.
[5] See his views on the validity of lay ordination and the propriety of administering the Lord's Supper without a minister, in Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 435 ff. and *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. VII, pp. 326 ff.

biographer,[1] "he seemed to contemplate life only as a scene of perpetual activity. . . . His turn of mind led him to cultivate the intellectual and practical parts of religion, rather than the devotional."

If John Sutcliff (1752–1814) had done nothing else, he would be entitled to lasting remembrance in view of the fact that it was on his motion that the representatives of the Northamptonshire Association decided to set apart an hour in the evening of the first Monday of every month for special prayer for the success of the Gospel. Born and brought up in an isolated spot about four miles from Wainsgate, Hebden Bridge, he was helped in his studies by John Fawcett, who sent him to the Bristol Academy. In the winter of 1771, he walked all the way from Yorkshire to Bristol. His only pastorate was at Olney, where he trained a number of men for the ministry. It was the Olney Church which sent William Carey into the ministry. Sutcliff was a well-read man, with an ample store of knowledge, which "he seemed almost as anxious to conceal as some are to display."[2] Fuller paid tribute to his integrity, benevolence and prudence, and to the services he rendered the Missionary Society. A typical Yorkshireman appears in Fuller's portrayal of his friend.

> He particularly excelled in practical judgment. When a question of this nature came before him, he would take a comprehensive view of its bearings, and form his opinion with so much precision as seldom to have occasion to change it. His thoughts on those occasions were prompt, but he was slow in uttering them. He generally took time to turn the subject over, and to digest his answer. . . . One of the students who was with him said he never saw him lose his temper but once, and then he immediately retired into his study. . . . He is said never to have hastily formed his friendships and acquaintances, and therefore rarely had reason to repent of his connexions; while every year's continued intimacy drew them nearer to him; so that he seldom lost his friends.

Fuller had so learned to rely on Sutcliff's judgment that, when perplexing letters came from India, he would get his horse and

[1] Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 476 ff.

[2] This book has benefited from the remarkable library he collected and bequeathed to the Horton Academy on the condition that the trustees paid his relatives the nominal sum of £100.

ride over to Olney, "where he could see things better than he could at Kettering." The candid Morris says that caution was so thickly woven into the texture of Sutcliff's mind "as nearly to destroy its elasticity."[1] He needed to be cautioned against caution itself.

Space forbids more than a mention of Samuel Pearce (1766–1799), who threw himself heart and soul into the work of the Missionary Society and would have gone to India, if his health had permitted. "The Seraphic Pearce" he was called, for many in the congregation who heard him pray exclaimed, "We scarcely ever seemed to pray before."

In 1793, John Ryland (1753–1825) left College Lane, Northampton, to become the pastor of the Broadmead Church and president of the academy in Bristol, but the three friends kept in the closest touch. Ryland had been a youthful prodigy. His father wrote of him:

> John is now eleven years and seven months old. He has read Genesis in Hebrew five times through; he read through the Greek Testament before nine years old; he can read Horace and Virgil; he has read through *Telemachus* in French; he has read Pope's Homer in eleven volumes, Dryden's Virgil in three volumes, Rollins' Ancient History in ten volumes; and he knows the pagan mythology surprisingly.

John Ryland also had a passion for natural history, in the pursuit of which, said Robert Hall, "he was much assisted by the peculiar structure of his eyes, which were a kind of natural microscopes." In theology he was a Calvinist but devoted to Jonathan Edwards. According to Hall, "The two extremes against which he was most solicitous to guard the religious public, were Pelagian pride and Antinomian licentiousness: the first of which he detested as an insult on the grace of the Gospel; the last on the majesty and authority of the law." In the West, Ryland exercised a wide influence and carried there the principles which had been so effective in reviving the churches of the Midlands, using the letters he received from Serampore to inflame their zeal. The Western Association became so large that,

[1] *op. cit.*, p. 476.

in 1823, it was necessary to divide it into four smaller areas. It is noteworthy that the West showed its old powers of leadership by founding in 1816 an Aged or Infirm Baptist Ministers' Society.

In the year after Ryland died, Robert Hall (1764–1831) returned to Bristol as pastor of the Broadmead Chapel. Before his father put him in Ryland's school at Northampton, the precocious child had carried his books in his pinafore to lie and read them in the long grass of the burial-ground. He had read Jonathan Edwards and Bishop Butler by the time he was nine. After a time at the Bristol Academy he went, as a Dr. John Ward scholar, to Aberdeen University, where he graduated. He ministered in Cambridge, Leicester, and Bristol, where his great oratorical powers drew overflowing congregations. His biographer, Olinthus G. Gregory,[1] who was among his hearers at Cambridge, thus describes the scene in the chapel:

> From the commencement of his discourse an almost breathless silence prevailed. . . . Not a sound was heard but that of the preacher's voice—scarcely an eye but was fixed upon him—not a countenance that he did not watch, and read, and interpret. . . . As he advanced and increased in animation, five or six of the auditors would be seen to rise and lean forward over the front of their pews, still keeping their eyes fixed upon him. Some new or striking sentiment or expression would, in a few minutes, cause others to rise in like manner; shortly afterwards still more, and so on, until long before the close of the sermon, it often happened that a considerable portion of the congregation were seen standing.

Hall's sermons now lie unopened on library shelves, but to satisfy the curiosity of our readers, we quote the following passage from the sermon he preached when Napoleon threatened to invade England. Comparison with Mr. Winston Churchill's speeches, when Hitler threatened, will bring out the change that has come over oratorical fashions.

> From the most fixed principles of human nature, as well as from the examples of all history, we may be certain the conquest of this country, should it be permitted to take place, will not terminate in any ordinary catastrophe,

[1] Gregory (1774–1841) was a Baptist. Of humble birth, he was for over thirty years Professor of Mathematics at the Royal Military Academy and was one of the projectors of London University. See D.N.B.

in any much less calamitous than utter extermination. Our present elevation will be the exact measure of our future depression as it will measure the fears and jealousies of those who subdue us. While the smallest vestige remains of our former greatness, while any trace or memorial exists of our having been once a flourishing and independent empire, while the nation breathes, they will be afraid of its recovering its strength, and never think themselves secure of their conquest till our navy is consumed, our wealth dissipated, our commerce extinguished, every liberal institution abolished, our nobles extirpated; whatever in rank, character, and talents gives distinction in society, called out and destroyed, and the refuse which remains swept together into a putrefying heap by the besom of destruction. The enemy will not need to proclaim his triumph; it will be felt in the most expressive silence of extended desolation.

Properly to estimate Hall, it must be remembered that all his life he had scarcely a day free from acute pain. Twice he had a short attack of insanity. His courage was matchless. He was a firm and consistent advocate of the freedom of the Press. In his Leicester days, he issued an appeal on behalf of the fund raised by the distressed frame-work knitters of the town and asserted the right of wage-earners to combine in defence of their interests.[1] His biography is still worth reading, for Hall was a brilliant conversationalist. Innumerable stories were told about him. The great Welsh preacher, Christmas Evans, once expatiated to Hall on the copiousness and expressiveness of the Welsh language and wound up by saying that he wished Dr. John Gill's works had been written in Welsh. Hall replied, "I wish they had, sir; I wish they had, with all my heart, sir, for then I should never have read them! They are a continent of mud, sir!" An important member of Hall's congregation took him to task for not preaching more frequently on predestination. Looking him steadily in the face and speaking slowly, Hall said, "Sir, I perceive that nature predestinated you to be an ass, and what is more, I see that you are determined to make your calling and election sure."

In the second decade of the nineteenth century, Robert Hall re-opened the debate on open versus closed communion. His chief opponent was Joseph Kinghorn (1766–1832), who, after being trained at the Bristol Academy, had settled as the pastor of the

[1] See Payne, *The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England*, pp. 93, 98 f.

Particular Church at Norwich and remained there till his death. Tall and frail, and (to quote the words of his College principal) "of the most amiable disposition in the world," he was adored by his people for the saintliness of his character. He was not a great preacher, but a devoted pastor, as well as an ardent supporter of the Missionary Society and a leader in the denomination. The Norwich meeting-house became so crowded that it had to be rebuilt. During this time, Jeremiah Colman, the founder of the famous mustard firm, joined the church. At the death of this bachelor Baptist minister, an Anglican clergyman remarked, "If half Norwich had died, the loss would not have been so much felt." There was a vein of conservatism in Kinghorn's nature. When, towards the close of his life, the first railways were being built, he wrote: "I confess I am not much taken with the tremendous strides of this march of intellect. For recollect how many good coals are burnt in this scheme of whizzing from place to place, and nothing finite can last for ever." Evidently he was a man who preferred to leave nothing changed in a fast changing world. When Robert Hall advocated open-communion, Kinghorn replied in his *Baptism a Term of Communion at the Lord's Supper*, in which he defended the strict Baptist position. His argument was that "it is not according to the law of Christ that persons not baptized should come to the Lord's table." Kinghorn naturally assumed that a person baptized in infancy was unbaptized. He also pressed the point that those who favoured mixed communion and yet declined to admit unbaptized persons into church-membership, virtually admitted that the Strict Communionists were right.

Robert Hall's contention had been that "no man, or set of men, are entitled to prescribe as an indispensable condition of communion, what the New Testament has not enjoined as a condition of salvation." This contention he expanded thus:

> Reflect on the enormous impropriety of demanding a greater uniformity amongst the candidates for admission into the Church militant than is requisite for union with the Church triumphant—of claiming from the faithful, while encompassed with darkness and imperfection, more harmony and correctness

of sentiment than is necessary to qualify them to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God—of pretending to render a Christian society an enclosure more sacred and more difficult of access than the abode of the Divine Majesty—and of investing every little Baptist teacher with the prerogative of repelling from his communion a Howe, a Leighton, or a Brainerd, whom the Lord of glory will welcome to His presence. Transubstantiation presents nothing more revolting to the dictates of common-sense.

The future lay with Hall, and by a curious irony the victory for the more liberal view was won by the men who succeeded Kinghorn as ministers of the Norwich Church.[1]

In Lancashire and Yorkshire also new leaders appeared, who broke the spell of hyper-Calvinism, revived Association life, supported the Missionary Society and founded another college. The Yorkshire and Lancashire Association had first met in 1695, but its meetings were sporadic till 1786, when certain leaders met at Preston and determined to adopt the forward policy of the Northamptonshire men. Two of those present at Preston in 1786 deserve special mention. It was John Fawcett (1740–1817) who first envisaged the idea of drawing the Baptists of the two counties together again in Association-life. Born in Bradford in obscurity and converted by a sermon preached by Whitefield, he was called to the pastorate of the Wainsgate Church, near Hebden Bridge, and spent the rest of his life in that district. Though self-taught, he was a man of real culture and a voluminous writer. His essay on "Anger" attracted the attention of King George III. He published a *Devotional Family Bible* in two volumes. It is an indication of the trend of Fawcett's mind that after every chapter he added a "devotional exercise or aspiration." His hymn "Blest be the tie that binds" will long be used. His passion for learning made him anxious for a better educated ministry than the Baptists of the North then possessed. For twenty years he had his own private academy in which he gave a sound general education to many

[1] As Stoughton points out, it is a mistake to think of this controversy as sectarian and ephemeral. "The discussion really applies to the practice of almost every Church in Christendom, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, whether established or independent; for most make baptism a term of communion" (*op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 266 ff.).

youths and also trained some for the ministry, among whom was William Ward of Serampore.[1] But Fawcett saw that something more was needed and he was one of the fathers of the Horton Academy (now Rawdon College) founded in 1804. He was called to the presidency of the Bristol Academy, but he declined, preferring to dwell among his own people. He had a profound dislike of theological wrangling and never preached controversial sermons dealing with the distinctive points of high-Calvinism. Some who liked that kind of thing and mistook it for religion, complained that Fawcett never gave them the pure John Gill. He replied in verses which ended thus:

> To be brief, my dear friends, you may say what you will,
> I'll ne'er be confined to read nothing but Gill.

It is suggestive that the first two sermons he ever preached were from the texts "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold, them also I must bring," and "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." He never preached against hyper-Calvinism; he simply lived it down. The catholicity of his friendships was remarkable. He spent three or four days a week reading classics and divinity with Dan Taylor, the Arminian Baptist, and Henry Foster, a student of Queen's College, Oxford, and afterwards a clergyman in the Church of England. When the Missionary Society was founded, Fawcett's soul was one of the first to catch the flame. He published a penny pamphlet on the subject and collected £200 which he sent to Fuller. He habitually spent much time in prayer and meditation and constantly warned others to "guard against useless controversy and unnecessary contention." Probably the only rash thing he ever did was to marry at the age of nineteen a woman five or six years older than himself. He often said that his example was not one to be universally imitated!

The other leader who used his influence at Preston in 1786 was Samuel Medley (1738–1799), who had been pastor of the Liver-

[1] John Foster (1770–1843), the essayist, was a Wainsgate lad who had studied under Fawcett and at Bristol. After nearly emptying five churches, he found his vocation as a man of letters and won a national reputation by his contributions to the *Eclectic Review*. His essay on "Decision of Character" is still worth reading.

pool Church since 1772. In his youth he had opportunities that Fawcett had never enjoyed; yet, when the two men met at an Association held at Wainsgate in 1773, they had taken to each other, and Medley had given Fawcett "the first and principal encouragement for forming a private seminary." Medley had received a sound education from his father who was a friend of Sir Isaac Newton. He entered the Navy as a midshipman and rose to the rank of master's mate. During three years of service in the Mediterranean, he slipped into the Navy's habits of speech and "went great lengths in profaneness;" but the religious impressions of his upbringing persisted. Casting his eyes one day on the captain's dog, he "suddenly wished he was that dog, that he might have no soul to save." He was invalided out of the Navy as the result of a severe wound received in action against the French. His grandfather, who was one of Andrew Gifford's deacons at Eagle Street, brought him under the influence of that exceptional man. The joint influence of Whitefield and Gifford secured Medley's conversion. He settled down as a schoolmaster and began to preach. After a few years as pastor at Watford, he was called to Liverpool, where his success was such that the chapel had to be rebuilt in Byrom Street. On his annual visits to London, Medley regularly preached at Whitefield's Tabernacle in Tottenham Court Road. He never forgot his early connexion with the sea and devoted much time in Liverpool to work among sailors, talking with them on the streets, addressing them on the wharves, and preaching specially to them in his chapel. In an age that allowed no man to die in peace but pestered him with questions about his spiritual state, the dying Medley replied to one anxious enquirer, "I am looking up to Jesus—but a point or two more, and I shall be at my Heavenly Father's house."[1]

The first president of the new academy in the North was William Steadman (1764–1837), who had been trained at Bristol before he became pastor at Broughton, Hants. His stipend was

[1] See Ivimey, Vol. IV, pp. 590 ff. Medley's son, also Samuel (1769–1857), was a portrait-painter, a deacon of the Hackney Church under F. A. Cox, and one of the founders of University College, London. See also D.N.B. for both father and son.

only forty pounds per annum and a house, but he immediately sent Fuller a guinea as soon as he heard of the foundation of the Missionary Society, at whose expense he and John Saffery (pastor at Salisbury) went on an evangelistic tour through Cornwall. He repeated the tour in the following year (1797) with Francis Franklin, then a student at Bristol and afterwards for many years pastor at Coventry.[1] He was persuaded to leave the pastorate of the church at Devonport to come to Bradford in 1805, which then had only seven thousand inhabitants. He combined the presidency of the academy with the pastorate of the Westgate Church. After he had taken stock of the Baptist churches of the North, he said: "Most of the ministers are illiterate, their talents small, their manners dull and uninteresting, their systems of divinity contracted, their maxims of church government rigid, and their exertions scarcely any at all." For over thirty years Steadman set an example of tireless industry. He was the pastor of a large church which required from him three sermons every Sunday and one during the week; often the sole tutor in a theological college; and still an evangelist making extensive preaching tours. He seems to have foreseen the large increase in population which the Industrial Revolution was to bring to the North. His passion was "to establish new churches within the limits of the Association." His was the driving force behind the new Itinerant Society founded in 1809, under whose auspices he set his students to work. Gradually he wore down the prejudice against an educated ministry, though even at the end of his life he was regarded with suspicion by some who disliked "man-made ministers." He was liberal to a fault and often imposed upon. His son says that he ruled his church by love and gentleness "but the most despotic monarch could scarcely have wished more real supremacy." In later life, he was extremely corpulent and very short-sighted. As a preacher he was "a tolerable favourite," whose design it was "to do good, not to shine; to instruct, not to please; to convert, not to delight." Like Fawcett, he disliked theological

[1] George Eliot, who attended a school kept by Franklin's daughters, drew a lifelike picture of Franklin, who is the original of Rufus Lyon in her *Felix Holt*.

controversy and never "coveted the honour of being reckoned an acute disputant." We are told that "nothing distressed him more than to listen to a discourse above the comprehension of the audience to whom it was ostensibly addressed." He used to say that "what the poor could understand, certainly the rich might." A punster has said that Steadman's ideal for his students was "Evangelism steadied by education."

Thomas Langdon (1755–1824) was another Bristol College student whose only pastorate was that of the church in Leeds, where he also kept a school. He was the preacher when the new academy was founded. The Circular Letter on Election which he wrote for the Association in 1810 shows how Fullerism had penetrated the North. He repudiates the notion that any are decreed by God to perdition and maintains that the doctrine of election is not inconsistent with a general invitation to sinners to accept the Gospel. He appeals to his readers not to think unfavourably of their fellow-Christians who differ from them on a subject "which is professedly involved in much obscurity." His spectacled face is truly benign but, in 1791, he had spoken in scathing terms of those Christians who supported the slave trade, referring to them as "those professors of religion who stand forth as the defenders and patrons of the most horrid and diabolical practice that ever disgraced the conduct of mankind." Prominent in the work of the Association and the first secretary of the Northern Education Society was Thomas Littlewood (1753–1817), a Yorkshireman by birth who did his life-work in Rochdale, where he also kept a school. He was noted for his generosity and hospitality, for his heart was as large as his body. All these men and the laymen who laboured with them—James Bury (*d.* 1815), the generous calico-printer of Sabden and many others—did their work so well that the Yorkshire and Lancashire Association became unwieldy and had to be divided in 1837.

Still further north, in the county of Durham, we may trace the same process going on. A new and re-invigorating influence came into Baptist life, "evincing itself in the form of missionary effort to the heathen world, in the first instance; and then, in the

reaction of that movement, in the revival of the Churches at home."[1] Here the leader was Charles Whitfield (1748–1821), for fifty years pastor at Hamsterley, during the greater part of which time he carried the churches of the four most northerly counties on his shoulders. A Durham man and a convert of Wesley's, Whitfield went over to Calvinism and Baptist views and joined the church in Newcastle. Hartley came from Haworth and Crabtree from Bradford to ordain him at Hamsterley. He lived in straitened circumstances till he married a wealthy woman as his second wife. Thereafter, he rather liked to air his knowledge of agriculture and law to the neighbouring farmers. In 1798, when the Association met at Hamsterley, the Northern Evangelical Society was formed to spread the Gospel "in the more benighted spots of these counties." Whitfield was its first president. He also gave his support to the Irish Mission. A Fullerite and a believer in strict communion he was "the head, the heart and the hand of the Association." Of a sanguine temper, "he had a large proportion of the good of that temperament (and). . . a share of the evil. . . (being) sometimes rather overbearing in his manner." In the pulpit he presented a good appearance "but was never popular as a preacher, from the circumlocution that usually attended his explanations."[2]

The Angas family was woven inextricably into the life of the Northern Association; and many of its eighteenth-century representatives were remarkable for their longevity. Two who belong to this period deserve special mention. William Henry Angas (1781–1832) became the captain of one of his father's West Indiamen, after many adventures in other waters.[3] He gave up seafaring life and in 1809 was baptized by Rippon in London, by whose church, after a period of study in Edinburgh, he was called to the ministry in 1817. Thereafter, he devoted himself to the spiritual welfare of the sailors of different nations, for this purpose going to the Continent to learn French and Dutch. In 1820, he went with William Ward of Serampore to Holland to

[1] Douglas, *History of the Baptist Churches in the North of England*, p. 201.
[2] Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 266.
[3] *ibid.*, p. 277.

interest the Dutch Baptists (the Mennonites) in the Mission. In this way he was led to connect his mission to seamen with the support of the Baptist Missionary Society, at whose request he visited Baptist churches in Holland, France, and Switzerland. In the different seaports of Britain and the Channel Islands he established Sunday schools, Bible classes and libraries for sailors. In 1831, at the request of the Society and at his own expense, he visited the mission stations in Jamaica. He died of cholera at Tynemouth.[1] There was a short-lived Baptist Continental Society from 1831 to 1836. George Fife Angas (1789–1879) was a merchant and owner of West Indiamen, who provided a free passage in one of his ships for a missionary of the Society proceeding to Belize in the Bay of Honduras.[2] In 1834, he was appointed by the Crown commissioner for the foundation of the Colony of South Australia. He emigrated to Adelaide in 1851 and developed the province, being prominent in mercantile and banking circles. The *Dictionary of National Biography* states that he founded the National and Provincial and other banks.

We have already noticed the small effect of the Evangelical Revival upon London Baptists; but here, too, the necessary new leaders appeared. John Rippon, Abraham Booth, and Joseph Ivimey were the men who did the most to change the situation and all three came from the Provinces. In 1773, John Rippon (1750–1836), a young and lively Devonian, trained at Bristol, succeeded the pedantic John Gill at Carter Lane, and stayed there till he died, lifting the church till it became "one of the wealthiest within the pale of Nonconformity," and a generous supporter of missions at home and abroad. Many old-fashioned Baptists must have opened their eyes when, in 1790, he published the first number of his *Baptist Annual Register* and dedicated it

> to all the baptized ministers and people in America, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the United Netherlands, France, Switzerland, Poland, Russia, Prussia, and elsewhere . . . with a desire of promoting an universal interchange

[1] Another Baptist who left the Navy for work among sailors and who founded the first Sailors' Home, was George Charles Smith (1782–1863). Both W. H. Angas and Smith appear in the D.N.B.

[2] Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

of kind offices among them and in serious expectation that before many years elapse . . . a deputation from all these climes will meet probably in London to consult the ecclesiastical good of the whole.

Here we have in germ the notion of a Baptist World Alliance. Rippon constantly printed in his *Register* letters from Carey and his colleagues, as well as letters from Baptists in America. His hymn-book has already been mentioned, and his tune-book should not be forgotten.

Abraham Booth (1734–1806) was the pastor of the Prescot Street Church for over thirty years. The son of a Nottinghamshire farmer, he was a convert of the Midland Evangelical Revival and ministered to one of the churches (Kirkby Woodhouse) which entered the New Connexion of General Baptists. He changed his views and became a Calvinist, publishing his sermons under the title *The Reign of Grace* (1768). This secured his call to the Prescot Street Church which ordained him. It has often been said that he went over from Arminianism to an extreme Calvinism. This is a mistake, as the following quotation from *The Reign of Grace* will show:[1]

Complete provision is made for the certain salvation of every sinner, however unworthy, who feels his want, and applies to Christ. The Gospel is not preached to sinners, nor are they encouraged to believe in Jesus, under the formal notion of their being elected. No: these tidings of heavenly mercy are addressed to sinners, considered as ready to perish.

In 1796, Booth was even more emphatic in his *Glad Tidings to Perishing Sinners*. Its sub-title indicates its contents: "the genuine Gospel a complete warrant for the ungodly to believe in Christ." Booth retained his belief in election but was in no way hampered in calling upon all to repent and believe on Christ. He took a commanding position in London, consistently supported the Missionary Society and trained deacons who took a leading part in founding the Stepney College. Booth also took the lead in founding an Itinerant Society in 1797 for preaching in the villages. It was virtually a branch of the Missionary Society and was intended as

[1] I owe the citation to Whitley, *Calvinism and Evangelism in England*, p. 35. The D.N.B., for example, makes the mistake to which attention is called.

an answer to those who refused to support the Society on the plea that there was enough work to do at home, without sending missionaries abroad. Later it was renamed the Baptist Home Missionary Society and its work was absorbed into that of the Baptist Union.

Booth's career was a remarkable one for a man who used to say that he had a wife and family before he knew anything of the theory of English grammar. Utterly devoted to the interests of his people, "he appeared always willing to give up almost everything to the decision of the church; the consequence was that the church gave up almost everything to his decision."[1] He lived economically and so was able to help unostentatiously many needy persons and causes. He counselled Ivimey, to whom he gave a plain meal in the kitchen, to be careful how he invited people to dine and to take tea. "If you do not take care, my friend, you will spend twenty pounds a year at your tea-table," he said. On the other hand, when a woman belonging to his church left him a legacy and he found out that there were poor relations of hers surviving, he quietly went to the Bank of England and transferred the whole amount to them. When the Missionary Society was first founded, he was the only London minister to give it any support. It was Booth who introduced to Fuller and Carey the eccentric John Thomas (1757–1801), surgeon in the service of the East India Company, who had already begun evangelistic work in Bengal and had returned to England to look for a colleague.

In an era which promoted Societies for all kinds of objects, William Fox (1736–1826), one of Abraham Booth's deacons at Prescot Street, founded, in 1785, the Society for the Establishment and Support of Sunday Schools throughout the Kingdom of Great Britain (later merged into the Sunday School Union) with the aim of teaching children to read the Bible. It was supported by Dissenters and Churchmen. To a Baptist who expressed the hope that he would confine the society to his own denomination, "and then we shall act in harmony," Fox replied, "I shall

[1] Ivimey, Vol. IV, p. 375.

not be contented, Sir, until every person in the world is able to read the Bible, and therefore we must call upon all the world to help us."[1] When Fox died, Manchester alone had nearly forty thousand children in its Sunday schools and few Baptist churches were without such a school,[2] Joseph Fox (*d.* 1816), a surgeon and dentist, who was a member of Rippon's church, was a supporter of the efforts of Joseph Lancaster to teach the children of the poor and was one of the secretaries of the British and Foreign School Society.[3] Some Baptist churches founded and maintained day-schools of their own. Cannon Street, Accrington, and Atherton, Lancashire, are examples. Mention should also be made of Joseph Hughes (1769–1833), pastor of a Baptist church in Battersea who, in 1803, wrote an essay on "The Excellency of the Holy Scriptures an Argument for their more General Dispersion," which led in the next year to the foundation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, of which Hughes was made one of the secretaries.[4] A former student and tutor of the Bristol Academy, he was also the first secretary of the Religious Tract Society founded in 1799.

The foundation in the North of a second Baptist academy aroused the London Baptists to action. As early as 1752, the London Baptist Education Society had been founded and Thomas Llewellyn (1720–1793) engaged as tutor. The students were either boarded out or boarded with the tutor, but the temptations of city life proved too much for some of them. A few were sent to Fawcett's academy, with the result that London interest in the fund was weakened. A new beginning was made in 1810 when "The Baptist Academical Institution at Stepney" (now Regent's Park College, Oxford) was founded. Again, Abraham Booth's church took the lead. One of his deacons, William Taylor, a wealthy hosier, purchased the premises and gave liberally; William Gutteridge, another deacon, became the treasurer.[5]

[1] Ivimey, Vol. IV, p. 83. [2] See Whitley, H.B.B., p. 261.

[3] See Ivimey, Vol. IV, pp. 382 ff. Another Baptist surgeon was Thomas Chevalier, F.R.S. (1767–1824), Surgeon Extraordinary to the King and Professor of Anatomy and Surgery to the London Royal College of Surgeons. For Chevalier, who was a deacon of the Keppel Street Church, see D.N.B.

[4] Ivimey, Vol. IV, pp. 92 ff.

[5] Ivimey, Vol. IV, pp. 120 ff., 585. For Llewellyn, see D.N.B.

William Newman (1773–1835), who had been one of J. C. Ryland's ushers at Enfield, "in a most ingenuous and disinterested manner gave up a profitable and respectable private academy" to become the first president, though he retained his pastorate at Bow for life. The foundation of the new academy "began to change the character of the London ministers. It must be owned with regret that they had, on the whole, been a drag on the denomination; many were illiterate, many had to be expelled for immorality, most were terribly conservative."[1]

Joseph Ivimey (1773–1834), a Hampshire man converted by a sermon of William Steadman's, was a married man with a family when the Portsea Church formally recognized his itinerant labours. He was then in business as a tailor. After a pastorate of less than a year at Wallingford, he was called in 1803 to Eagle Street (Andrew Gifford's church), which he brought into the main stream of London Baptist life. He added eight hundred members to the church and sent twenty men into the ministry; and had the remarkable experience of baptizing his father and mother. The amount of secretarial and literary work done by this man, who had received but a meagre education in his youth, is quite extraordinary. He was only thirty-three when he issued the first volume of his *History of the English Baptists*. He wrote lives of Milton and Kiffin, as well as many pamphlets on the communion question, and was a consistent advocate of the abolition of slavery. In opposition to Robert Hall, he was a strict communionist, arguing that the Scriptures enjoin baptism as a condition of communion and that open-communion Baptists have no sufficient reason for separation from the Congregationalists.[2] A moderate Calvinist, he was soon collecting subscriptions in London for the Missionary Society, on whose committee he was placed. In thanking him for one of his remittances, Fuller wrote:[3]

> I thank you for your diligence in increasing the subscriptions. Go on, only let it be gently, without pressing anyone, without pushing or boasting,

[1] Whitley, B.L., p. 61.

[2] Andrew Fuller and Abraham Booth were also supporters of close communion.

[3] Ivimey, Vol. IV, p. 124 n.

which are such common things in London, that Londoners are in danger of doing them without being conscious of it.

To commemorate the passing of the Act which abolished slavery in the Colonies, Ivimey induced his church to erect a school and alms-houses for the poor of the church. "His countenance was florid, and, though in person not above the ordinary stature, and in early life slender, yet, as he advanced in years he became sufficiently corpulent to afford disease, especially in its final attack, a signal opportunity for displaying more perceptibly the humiliating evidences of its progressive victories."[1]

Ivimey was the founder and secretary of two societies which survive to this day; and, in both cases, the inspiration came from the success of the Missionary Society. In 1811, he wrote an article on "Union essential to Prosperity," in which he asked, "Does not the constitution of our churches, which prevents all external interference, and therefore preserves them independent of each other, require some general bond of union?" He proposed that, in the following summer, a General Assembly, "composed of the ministers and messengers from the neighbouring churches, and of two deputies from every Association in the United Kingdom," should be held in London or elsewhere. In a revealing sentence, he said:

> If at this meeting a report was to be made of the state of the Mission in India, and collections made after the sermon for its support . . . a spirit of zeal and benevolence would be thus diffused through all our churches. In addition to this, an account of the itinerant labours in our own country, through the medium of the secretary of the Baptist Itinerant Society in London may be made, and thus a spirit of emulation to visit our dark and benighted villages may be excited.

Fuller was asked what he thought of the proposal. "You will only show the poverty of the denomination," was his reply; but he agreed to consult Sutcliff. Evidently Sutcliff's excessive caution was overcome, for when the meetings were held in London the next year, £320 was collected for the Missionary Society, after

[1] Pritchard, *Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Joseph Ivimey*, p. 305 (London, 1835). The sentence quoted is typical of the style of Pritchard.

the proceedings had opened with sermons from Fuller and Ryland. The next morning, Rippon presided over a meeting at Carter Lane of, apparently, sixty pastors from twenty counties.[1] It declared that "a more general union" was "very desirable," and decided to meet again next year. Ivimey and William Button were appointed joint-secretaries. Accordingly, in 1813, "The General Union of Baptist Ministers and Churches" was founded and a Constitution adopted, in which it was stated that the aim was the promotion of "the cause of Christ in general, and particularly in our own denomination, and especially to encourage and support our mission." The present Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland traces its descent back to this meeting held in Carter Lane, before breakfast, on the 24th of June, 1813. But the men behind the new venture were ahead of their time. In 1830, Ivimey had to admit that "this good design was never fully realized. The society soon ceased; but an annual meeting has been held at the vestry of Carter Lane meeting ever since."[2]

The other society in which Ivimey took the lead was the Baptist Society for promoting the Gospel in Ireland (1813). Several ministers had been to Ireland to collect funds for the Missionary Society. "The impression they received from beholding the religious and moral condition of Ireland led them to doubt the propriety of bringing away money from a country for propagating the Gospel in India, which was itself in circumstances but little superior, and in some parts not at all." It is noteworthy that the promoters of the Irish Society felt themselves unable to move until they had secured the concurrence of Fuller, Sutcliff, and Ryland and that the Missionary Society contributed twenty guineas. Ivimey was the secretary of the Irish Society till his death.[3]

It is also noteworthy that the treasurer of the Missionary Society, Benjamin Shaw, presided at the "numerous and respect-

[1] See Ivimey, Vol. IV, pp. 122 ff. The northern counties sent no representatives. The names of pastors only are given.

[2] Ivimey, Vol. IV, p. 382. The history of the Baptist Union has yet to be written. For the early years, see *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. II, pp. 217 ff., 241 ff.; Vol. IV, pp. 52 ff., 121 ff., 171 ff.

[3] Ivimey, Vol. IV, p. 164.

able meeting" which founded the Baptist Building Fund in 1824, whose object was "to assist in the erection, repair or enlargement of Particular Baptist chapels throughout the kingdom." The new society aimed at abolishing the "inconvenience and many serious evils" created by the numerous personal calls paid on wealthy Londoners by country ministers begging for their churches. Its first secretary was James Hargreaves, minister of Little Wild Street.[1]

Sweeping though it was, the victory of Fullerism was not quite complete among the Particular Baptists. There were some who repudiated Antinomianism and became ardent evangelists but who, nevertheless, retained high-Calvinistic doctrines. Their conservatism in doctrine naturally led them also to oppose the open-communion principles of Robert Hall. The leader of these conservatives was William Gadsby (1773–1844), who may be regarded as the patriarch of the present-day Strict and Particular Baptists. This remarkable man, the son of a roadmender, was born at Attleborough, near Nuneaton. He had little education and was apprenticed at thirteen to the craft of ribbon-weaving. In his teens his mind was turned to religion by the sight of three housebreakers being hanged in their shrouds at Coventry, in which city he was later baptized. He married, turned to stocking-weaving, and began to preach. For five years he was pastor of a group at Hinckley, but, from 1805 to the end of his life, was minister of Back Lane Chapel, Manchester, which he at once took out of the Yorkshire and Lancashire Association. He was a pulpit genius, with some of the eccentricities that go with genius. He had a wonderful voice which he knew how to manage, being one of the few men who could be heard in the old Free Trade Hall. One of his contemporaries in Manchester, Robert Halley (afterwards principal of New College, London), thus described him:

> He seemed a preacher made on purpose for the working classes. The common people heard him gladly. His popularity with the factory people of Manchester was extraordinary . . . when he came to Manchester he could not speak the dialect of the place; he had none of the intonations and modulations

[1] See further Seymour J. Price, *A Popu ar History of the Baptist Building Fund.*

of voice which, especially fifty years since, were so agreeable to the ears and hearts of Lancashire folk . . . but he knew his business well, and succeeded where many greater men than he have utterly failed. A man of plain sense, he sought to be nothing more than a plain preacher of Christ's plain Gospel. He had not a particle of affectation. He spoke thoroughly good English. . . . Scripture he knew well and quoted it with verbal accuracy and often with great effect. One author he had certainly studied, John Bunyan, and he was much the better for his study. . . . He had no learning, but he had no small share of mother wit and native humour. A little learning would probably have spoiled him. Illiterate as he was, he sometimes attracted men of learning and culture (I could mention remarkable instances), who heard him with great pleasure. His thoughts were natural, closely connected, logically arranged, and lucidly expressed. . . . His expressions were sometimes coarse, inexcusably so, but on devotional subjects no man spoke with more seriousness and gravity than he usually did. He was called an Antinomian, and probably he did not speak with sufficient discrimination or exactness on the nature of moral obligation, but no minister in Manchester lived a more moral life or presented to his hearers a more beautiful example of Christian discipline and self-control.[1]

One of Gadsby's earliest converts was John Warburton (1776–1857), a Lancashire weaver who worked his loom in a cellar, and was so desperately poor that only the kindness of the deacons of an Independent church, to which he belonged, saved him from being turned out of his cellar, and sent with his wife and young family to the workhouse. Eventually he went to Trowbridge where a chapel was built for him, in which he ministered for over forty years. Of a finer fibre than Gadsby, he was one of the few of his group who could fill its big London chapels at Gower Street and Great Alie Street. How he came to baptize a sometime Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford, will be told in our next chapter. Another of Gadsby's converts was John Kershaw (1792–1870), who ministered for over fifty years to a "separated people" in Rochdale.[2] In South Lancashire and part of Yorkshire, the

[1] *Lancashire: its Puritanism and Nonconformity*, Vol. II, pp. 484 ff. Halley probably had in mind such expressions as the following, used by Gadsby in preaching at Gower Street Chapel, "There is enough filth in the hearts of the people here to make the very walls stink."

[2] Much may be found about these and other Strict and Particular leaders in Dr. J. H. Philpot's *The Seceders*, 2 volumes, London, 1931–1932. To regular Baptists who have had no touch with their Strict and Particular brethren, I recommend these pleasant and gossipy volumes.

Gadsbyites, as they were long called, established their churches which they taught to regard ordinary Baptists as no better than Arminians. They were not Antinomians, though they preached so much about being no longer under the law but under grace, that they gave their opponents some pretext for charging them with that heresy. They retained all the characteristic emphases of high-Calvinism and denounced free-will, upholding in its stead sovereign grace. Their services were plain in the extreme, no instrumental music being allowed; and their ministers were never called "Reverend." They took an interest in Sunday school work and in the relief of the distressed, founding, in 1807, the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society. Their monthly paper, *The Gospel Standard, or Feeble Christian's Support*, was started in 1835 for circulation "amongst those who hang out for their banner the discriminating Sovereignty of God." Among the texts it carried under its title was "The election hath obtained it and the rest were blinded" (Romans xi. 7). It often informed its correspondents, "We do not know of any place of truth in the city you mention." The favourite name for their chapels was "Zoar," after the city to which Lot escaped from Sodom and which meant "Little." They were evidently acutely aware of the smallness of their numbers and their isolation from the main currents of religious life—a fact which may explain the stridency with which they criticized all who differed from them. They had, of course, no sympathy whatever with the principle of open-communion. Nevertheless, in those times, they did a fine work among the working classes. The number of lives they changed shows "how small among uninstructed people is the effect of dogmatic theology where 'Christ crucified to save sinners' is simply and earnestly preached."[1] These men had a deep religious experience of their own, which communicated itself to others in spite of the dogmatic form in which they clothed it.

In East Anglia also many Particular Baptists were alarmed at the growing acceptance of Fuller's modified Calvinism and Robert Hall's plea for open-communion. They had had their

[1] Halley, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 483.

share of the revival which had spread over the kingdom, as the figures for the county of Suffolk show. It had only three Baptist churches in 1795 but, in 1835, there were thirty-nine.[1] As early as 1807, misgivings about Fullerism appeared in the Suffolk and Norfolk Association which had been founded in 1769 on a strict-communion basis. The Circular Letter of the Association for 1807 took the form of a Testimony against Fullerism, which was denounced because it "tended covertly to introduce the Arminian doctrine of general redemption." In 1824, the influence of George Wright (1789-1873) began to make itself felt in the Association. The pastor of the church at Beccles, he was a convert from Arminianism, with a convert's enthusiasm for his new-found faith. His good education and real ability made him an excellent leader of the conservatives. The progressives were led by Cornelius Elven (1797-1873), pastor at Bury St. Edmunds, who stood for open communion and tried to avoid a conflict on the theological issue. But the clash could not be postponed and, in 1829, Wright and his supporters formed the Suffolk and Norfolk New Association, which continues to this day and remains outside the fellowship of the Baptist Union. The constitution of the new Association ruled out Fullerism by repudiating "the doctrine which asserts that saving faith is the duty of all men"; and excluded open communion by asserting "the necessity of baptism on a confession of faith and as a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper." To help their cause, Wright and his friends began to publish at Ipswich in 1833 a two-penny monthly called *The Gospel Herald; or Poor Christian's Magazine*. The first number states that it was started because "the sentiments of Arminianism (passing under different names) bid fair to inundate all the churches: against these we shall not fail to lift our voices, and by every possible means to caution our readers."

From Scotland came another influence which threatened some of the gains won by English Baptists under the leadership of Fuller. "Scotch Baptists" began to propagate their views in

[1] Klaiber, *The Story of the Suffolk Baptists*, p. 72. I am indebted to this book for much in this paragraph.

England, where they founded some churches and drew over others to their point of view. This caused Fuller real anxiety, for he realized instinctively how retrograde some of their doctrines and principles were. The "Scotch Baptists" owed their origin to Archibald McLean (1733-1812). A printer in Glasgow, he left the Presbyterian Church to become a Glasite or Sandemanian. John Glas, a minister of the Church of Scotland, had founded, in 1728, a small sect with the aim of restoring all the simplicities of the Church of the apostolic age. His son-in-law, Robert Sandeman, was appointed an elder and he propagated Glas's views in London, where the sect became known as the Sandemanians.[1] McLean left the Glasgow Glasites, together with Robert Carmichael, by reason of some dispute over discipline. A little later, the two friends became convinced, from the study of the New Testament, that the only subjects of baptism were believers and the mode was by immersion. They knew of no Baptists in Scotland and, therefore, wrote to Dr. John Gill, asking him to come to Scotland to form a church. Gill replied inviting them to come to London. Carmichael went and was baptized by Gill in the Barbican baptistery on October 9, 1765. A few months later, he baptized McLean and some others and thus a Baptist church was founded in Edinburgh with Carmichael as elder. A few years later, McLean, who had moved to Edinburgh, was appointed co-elder with Carmichael, and "Scotch Baptist" churches were founded in Dundee, Montrose and elsewhere.[2] Carmichael died in 1774 and thereafter McLean was the indefatigable leader, continuing as the overseer of a large printing office, until his responsibilities became so great that a small stipend was paid him to enable him to give all his time to the cause.

McLean carried over into the Baptist churches he founded the Sandemanian principle that both the doctrine and polity of a true

[1] The Sandemanians are now extinct. They remained Pedobaptist to the end. Michael Faraday was an elder of their London church.

[2] McLean and Carmichael knew nothing of the Baptist churches founded in Scotland by Baptists in the Cromwellian Army, nor of the first indigenous Baptist church founded at Keiss in 1750 by Sir William Sinclair of Dunbeath, Caithness.

church must be taken over literally and in detail from the New Testament. His followers, therefore, contended for "gathered" churches, having at least two ruling elders who were responsible for the government and teaching of the church, while the deacons attended to its financial and business affairs. Their elders were unpaid; and they had a certain contempt for an educated ministry[1] and were antagonistic to "a one man ministry." All the brethren were encouraged to exercise their gifts in prayer and mutual exhortation. They observed the Lord's Supper, which they called "The Breaking of Bread," every Lord's Day and made it a central feature of the service, often holding a Love Feast (Agape) between the morning and evening services. Without an elder to administer it, the Lord's Supper was not observed. They practised strict-communion, observed the tabu on eating things containing blood, kept up the kiss of charity (1 Thessalonians v. 26), and feet-washing as an act of hospitality. From the Sandemanians they took over extreme notions of the independence of each local church and their intellectualistic conception of justifying faith as "bare belief." McLean called it "simple faith," but he was always at pains to differentiate sharply between faith, hope, and love. Naturally his followers were called Sandemanian Baptists. Though they repudiated the designation, it was accurate enough, for McLeanism is Sandemanianism plus believers' baptism and a stricter rule of life than the Sandemanians practised.[2]

In the course of his visits to Scotland to gather funds for the Missionary Society, Fuller often met McLean and his followers. Both were Calvinistic Baptists and both were agreed that the

[1] When Brown University in Rhode Island conferred on McLean an honorary degree in consequence of his writings, he declined to take any notice of it. "The only effect it had upon him was to lead him to pity the childishness of those who transmitted it" (*Works*, Vol. VI, p. xciv.).

[2] It is interesting to notice that, in their desire to avoid all appearance of Pharisaism and as a result of their intellectualistic conception of faith, the Sandemanians developed a love of showy and expensive dress and an inordinate fondness for dancing and the theatre. For this worldly spirit they were assailed by McLean (*Works*, Vol. VI, p. xxxiv. ff.). There is a good account of the "Scotch Baptists" in *History of the Baptists in Scotland from Pre-Reformation Times* (ed. Yuille). My own account is based on a study of the sources.

Gospel should be offered to all, though McLean confined its proclamation to "a declaration of facts concerning the person and work of Christ." The McLeanites supported the Missionary Society liberally, but Fuller's common-sense mind soon noted their queer ways and was puzzled by them. He noted their liking for splitting hairs, their contentious spirit and fissiparous tendencies, their self-righteousness and uncharitable judgments of others. "A church thus conducted," he said, "must render all its members the slaves of terror; who agreed because they dare not disagree. Such a system must fritter the church into endless parties." "Its object is to annihilate the ministry of the Gospel; to be all teachers; to have no one paid for it."[1] Particularly obnoxious to Fuller was McLean's Sandemanian notion that justifying faith was an intellectual act pure and simple. To join the McLeanites, all a man had to do was to declare his creed and conform to their rules. They disclaimed all enquiry at such a time into the effects which his faith had had upon him. On this curious idea Fuller comments in his diary that it "will render faith a mere bone of contention, and their zeal will be all consumed in the tithing of mint and cummin. Perhaps also this will be the last time I shall be admitted into their pulpits." He would have liked to avoid controversy but McLean, who was a metaphysically minded Scot with a liking for the finer points of an argument, forced it upon him. He did not hesitate to say that there was no difference, as to its nature, between the faith of devils and that of Christians. To this Fuller replied, "If faith be a mere assent of the understanding, and have nothing of moral good in it, how can it be the object of *command?* How can it be a *duty?*" Another theological point on which Fuller and McLean differed concerned the Eternal Sonship of Christ, which the latter denied, maintaining that in the Scriptures Christ is not called the Son of God antecedent to His Incarnation. Fuller lamented that the pertinacious McLean was a difficult adversary to refute, but his common-sense enabled him to cut his way through to the essentials in his *Strictures on Sandemanianism*, published in 1810. Briefly his argument is this: allowances must be made for the

[1] Ryland, *op. cit.*, pp. 269, 410.

oriental customs and modes of speech in the Bible;[1] to require express authority from Scripture for every particular relating to the organization of Christian churches is to ask for what God has not been pleased to give.

The peculiar ideas of McLean filtered into England by the West Coast route, through Whitehaven, Lancaster, Preston, Lytham, Liverpool, Chester, and Manchester; and by the East Coast route through Newcastle. In all these places "Scotch Baptist" congregations were gathered. A flourishing church was established at Nottingham and a small society was organized at Beverley in the East Riding, as well as a considerable one in London. None of them exists to-day. Some have become Strict and Particular, others have joined the Churches of Christ, and yet others have thrown in their lot with the more regular Baptist churches. On the outskirts of Burnley, at Haggate, a Baptist church had been established about 1760 which, in 1834, joined the "Scotch Baptists." This church, with its three daughter churches, still retains the plurality of (unpaid) elders and stands aloof from the Baptist Union.

From Chester, McLean's views spread into North Wales, where they were adopted by a number of Particular Baptist churches. Some remain to this day and keep up friendly relations with the Haggate group; but others, under the influence of Alexander Campbell, have joined with the Churches of Christ. In one of the latter, the Berea Church at Criccieth, David Lloyd George, England's war-time Prime Minister, was reared. His grandfather was the church's McLeanite minister; his uncle and foster-father, Richard Lloyd, was its co-elder for over sixty years after it had gone over to the Campbellites.[2] Alexander Campbell's main work was done in the United States where the body corresponding to the English Churches of Christ is known as "The Disciples

[1] When McLean visited Fuller at Kettering and preached for him, "Mr. Fuller pleasantly intimated that, though it was not the custom in England 'to wash the saints' feet' yet if he would allow him, he would very cheerfully clean his boots, and bring him a dry pair of slippers" (Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 311).

[2] This church was admitted to the Carnarvonshire Association in 1939 and to the Welsh Baptist Union in the following year.

of Christ," and numbers about one and a half million. In England the growth has not been so rapid. In 1926, there were said to be 196 churches with approximately 16,000 members belonging to the Churches of Christ. Their leading scholar, Dr. William Robinson, concedes that in the main it may be said that they "came into existence as a result of the work of Scotch (McLeanist) Baptists," and that in England the movement "began with a *stressing of intellectual values.*"[1] Quite recently conversations have taken place between representatives of the Churches of Christ and the Baptist Union, with a view to closer relations, "not excluding the possibility of union."

Thomas Sheraton (1751-1806), whose fame rests upon his skill and originality in designing furniture in a severer style than that of Chippendale, was "formerly, but not now, one of the Scotch Baptists," said Rippon in 1797.[2] A native of Stockton-on-Tees, Sheraton first appeared before the public as the author of a tract on Regeneration (1782) in which he described himself as a mechanic. The following passage from Douglas has escaped the notice of most who have written on Sheraton. Speaking of the Stockton Church, he says:[3]

> In 1799, Mr. Sheraton, a member of Mr. Abraham Booth's church, London, and a distinguished mechanic, coming to reside in Darlington, was called by the church to assist Mr. Short in the ministerial office. Messrs. Whitfield and Hassell conducted the services of ordination. The meetings of the church had, for some time previously to this, been held in a room of Mr. Sheraton's, and continued to be so, till his removal, and Mr. Short's death in 1802.

Sheraton's technical works, which were published with the help of subscribers, brought him no financial reward. He lived and died in poverty.

Happily McLeanism had but a short life in Scotland—or, perhaps, we had better say that the growing pains of the "Scotch Baptists" did not last long, and soon they outgrew their crude

[1] *What the Churches of Christ Stand For*, pp. 23, 25. Italics in the original. Compare the remark of McLean's biographer that McLean was "the man who first taught me how to think" (*Works*, Vol. VI, p. cviii.).

[2] *Register*, Vol. I, p. 475.

[3] *op. cit.*, pp. 242 ff

biblicism and narrow prejudices. A new and more powerful influence made itself felt in Scotland—that of the Haldane brothers who came of a family destined to provide Great Britain with one of its most distinguished statesmen. Robert Haldane (1764-1842), after serving as a midshipman and studying for a year at Edinburgh University, made the "grand tour," married and settled down on his ancestral estates. James Alexander Haldane (1768-1851) rose to be the captain of one of the East India Company's ships. In 1794, both brothers were converted. Robert sold his estates and devoted his large means to missionary work. Baulked in his desire to go to India as a missionary, he opened preaching-places (tabernacles) throughout Scotland and seminaries for the training of preachers. A remarkable revival of vital religion followed. James became the minister of an Independent chapel built for him by his brother in Edinburgh and served it with great success for fifty years. In 1808, both became Baptists and carried many of their followers with them in their change of views. The Baptist cause in Scotland received a fillip from their ardent propagandism. Though somewhat narrowly evangelical (they secured the exclusion of the Apocrypha from the Bibles issued by the British and Foreign Bible Society), they organized their churches on the open-communion principle. The Haldanes drew into their fellowship many of the followers of McLean. Fuller found himself much more at home in the new churches but continued to visit the older "Scotch Baptists." "They have formed," wrote Fuller of the Haldanes, "new churches, which are the only ones in Scotland with whom either myself or any other English Baptist would be admitted to communion. The New Baptists from the Tabernacle connection do not unite with the Old Scotch Baptists: indeed many have come off from the old connection to join them."[1]

Simultaneously, English Baptist influences began to tell upon Scottish Baptists through Christopher Anderson (1782-1852). A native of Edinburgh, he was an early convert of the Haldanes but

[1] Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 147. The "Scotch Baptists" admitted to communion only those who shared all their peculiar views.

was excluded from their church when he became a Baptist through his intercourse with English Baptist students at the university. Meeting Fuller in Edinburgh, he was encouraged by him to think of the ministry. He entered the university and continued his studies under Sutcliff at Olney and at the Bristol Academy. His health did not permit him to serve as a missionary in India, so he became the pastor of a regular Baptist church in Edinburgh, where he gathered a large congregation. His church practised close communion and was called an English Baptist Church to distinguish it from those which had a plurality of elders and weekly communions. Anderson was a tower of strength to the Baptist cause in Scotland and a leader in its home mission work. An ardent admirer of the Serampore missionaries, he served as their secretary in Britain after they had parted company with the Missionary Society. If he had succeeded Fuller as the secretary of the Society, the schism we are shortly to mention would never have taken place. His best known work, which cost him fourteen years of toil, is his *The Annals of the English Bible*. Some of the greatest Baptist preachers in England have been Scots but Baptists have never been numerous in Scotland.

Another associate of the Haldanes, Alexander Carson (1776-1844), deserves mention here. Born in Northern Ireland of Scotch Presbyterian parents, Carson was a distinguished graduate of Glasgow University and was once thought of for its Chair of Greek. He became the minister of a state-supported Presbyterian church at Tobermore, near Coleraine, but resigned in 1803 on becoming an Independent. A portion of his congregation followed him, and for ten years he preached in barns or the open-air, enduring poverty. While studying the New Testament to confute the Baptists, he became himself a Baptist about 1820, and raised a church of five hundred members. He observed many of the customs of the McLeanites, such as weekly communions, the kiss of charity, and he encouraged the brethren to exhort one another after his sermon. He is said to have contributed the scholarship to Robert Haldane's commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. He had the McLeanite liking for controversial divinity and published

many works. His *Baptism: its Mode and Subjects Considered* became a classic in Baptist circles. He did something to revive the Baptist witness in Ireland; but he was rather a solitary star, for Baptist principles have never made any great headway in that island.[1]

Something must now be said about the controversy which raged for ten years in the Particular Baptist churches over the Serampore Mission. At Serampore, Carey, Marshman, and Ward had astonished the religious world by the extent and variety of their missionary labours. They had planted stations in many parts of India and even in Java and the Moluccas. They had thrown their energies into educational work and into every movement for the amelioration of the social conditions of India. Carey's achievements as a translator of the Bible were almost incredible. Their labours and achievements had lifted the whole Baptist community in the esteem of the public. The Missionary Society had, moreover, acted like a magnet upon the Baptist churches, drawing them together, as never before, in a common purpose and putting new life into them. This new feeling of unity was endangered but, mercifully, not destroyed by the controversy which broke out between the Serampore missionaries and the Society's committee. To understand the controversy it must be remembered that Carey, Marshman, and Ward had been sent out to India on the clear understanding that they were to become independent of the support of the Society as soon as possible. From the day of his appointment to the day of his death, Carey did not receive from the Society more than £600, much of which was for the passage of himself and his family. To support themselves and their many missionary activities, Carey accepted the post as Professor of Indian Languages in the college in Calcutta for officials of the East India Company; Marshman and his wife kept a boarding school for European children who, in those days, could not easily be sent home for their education; Ward made the Mission Press a profitable concern. They had, moreover, for years all lived together, dining at a common table to reduce expenses, and had cast the whole of their earnings into the work of the Mission,

[1] For Carson, see D.N.B. and *Schaff-Herzog*.

reserving for each family only a trifling allowance for personal expenses. All three died poor men. It is calculated that these three men and John Clark Marshman (Dr. Marshman's son) contributed in this way to the Serampore Mission no less a sum than £100,000.

While Fuller lived, the affairs of the Society were carried on with complete harmony. The triumvirate at Serampore was matched by another at home. "It is not easy," said Robert Hall, "to determine whether the success of our Mission is most to be ascribed to the vigour of Fuller, the prudence of Sutcliff, or the piety of Ryland." Fuller's death, however, "loosed the silver cord of perfect confidence that formerly held the workers in India and in England together." The reins got into the hands of men who were not personally acquainted with the great pioneers. The offices of the Society were moved to London—a change which Fuller had always resisted. The committee was increased to thirty-five; a full-time paid secretary (John Dyer) was appointed and also a finance committee. From Bristol John Ryland said that he "trembled for the ark of the mission, when it should be transported to London and fall into the hands of mere counting-house men." Metropolitan influence now became dominant. Instead of the genial correspondence which Fuller had conducted with the Serampore men, the new secretary sent them formal resolutions from the committee. Carey complained that "his letters resembled those of a Secretary of State." He and his two colleagues were charged with having "amassed extensive property, and thereby enriched themselves and their families, while they had been unmindful of the great cause to which they originally devoted themselves." In vain they replied that for a quarter of a century none of them had received for his support a single penny from the funds of the Society. To the charge of endeavouring to alienate from the Society premises worth £3,000, they replied by erecting Serampore College, which cost them £15,000, and vesting it in eleven trustees. The Serampore men were adamant on the point that they had exclusive control of their own earnings. They would not give to the new committee what the old committee had never desired, much less asked. Both Ward and Marshman came home

to meet the committee but their journeys were fruitless. In 1827, the Society and the Serampore brethren agreed to part, and the Society lost the services of its founder and its most princely benefactor. "We are," wrote Carey, "your brothers, not your hired servants. We have always accounted it our glory to be related to the Society . . . and we shall rejoice therein so long as you permit us, but we will come under the power of none."

For ten years the controversy divided the Particular Baptists. The Serampore men still gathered funds in Britain and had their own treasurer and secretary. Their friends and supporters created "The Society in Aid of the Serampore Mission." The North, tenacious as ever of old friendships, rallied to its aid. "I have lived too long in the world," wrote Steadman, "to expect perfection anywhere; but I never knew any men who had done half what they have done." There were now two missionary societies at work in the same denomination, with separate funds, separate meetings and separate deputations. For years the Serampore men struggled on in the face of amazing misrepresentation. At first, they had been optimistic about their power to gather funds to support their work; but, as the younger Marshman said, "no man can sufficiently estimate without experience, the tremendous power which is possessed by a well-organized religious association to overwhelm an opponent." Carey died, but the controversy dragged on. The generosity and magnanimity of John Clark Marshman enabled fusion to take place in London in 1837, the day after Joshua Marshman was laid in his grave at Serampore. The story is a melancholy one but, as Samuel Vincent said, "it is also one of the most profitable warnings in modern church history."[1]

The next year saw the end of slavery in the British Colonies. In the movement for the abolition of the slave trade and the system of slavery, Baptists took an honourable part. In 1788, Robert Robinson of Cambridge published a sermon denouncing the trade and is said to have drawn up the first petition presented to the

[1] The bitter spirit aroused by the controversy may be indicated by what John Foster wrote to J. P. Mursell in 1836: "I have constantly regarded that conspiracy as one of the most odious and wicked proceedings to be found in any modern ecclesiastical annals." In 1841, John Dyer was found drowned.

House of Commons.[1] Pastors like James Dore of Maze Pond, Abraham Booth, Joseph Ivimey, and others denounced the traffic. But it was William Knibb (1803–1845) who did the most to secure the final abolition of the system in British dominions. Knibb was a Kettering man, who, at the age of twenty-one, went to Jamaica in the service of the Missionary Society. The white planters fiercely resented the presence of the missionaries, who were known to support the movement for the abolition of slavery. They flogged their converts, burned their homes and their chapels and threatened to murder them. In 1832, Knibb was back in England on furlough. A majority of the committee of the Missionary Society counselled a prudent policy with reference to slavery and a few advised silence. Knibb rose to his feet and said:

"Myself, my wife, and my children are entirely dependent on the Baptist Mission; we have landed without a shilling; but if necessary I will walk barefoot throughout the kingdom, but what I will make known to the Christians of England is what their brethren in Jamaica are suffering."

A few days later, the annual meeting of the Society was held. Several speeches were made. None touched the burning question of slavery. Then came Knibb's turn. He began by saying that he appeared as the advocate of twenty thousand Baptists, the greater part of whom would be flogged every time they were caught praying. His fervour and frankness increased as he proceeded with his speech. The cautious John Dyer tugged at his coat tail. Knibb pulled himself away and exclaimed:

"I will speak. At the risk of my connection with the Society, and of all I hold dear, I will avow this. And if the friends of missions will not hear me, I will turn and tell it to my God: nor will I desist till this greatest of curses is removed, and 'Glory to God in the highest' is inscribed on the British flag."

The speech closed the Baptist ranks firmly against slavery; and Knibb toured the country, rousing great audiences with his electrifying eloquence. The next year Parliament agreed to compensate the planters and to abolish the system. Midnight of July 31, 1838, was fixed for the final liberation of the slaves. For that

[1] Printed in Ivimey, Vol. IV, pp. 49 ff.

great day of emancipation, Knibb was back in Jamaica. A transparency with the word "Freedom" shone in front of his chapel, which was crowded to suffocation. A coffin had been made and a grave dug. Into the coffin were packed the whips, branding irons, and other badges of slavery. Then it was screwed down. As midnight drew near and the clock began to strike twelve, Knibb pointed to the dial and cried, "The hour is at hand; the monster slavery is dying." When the last note had died away, he shouted, "The monster is dead; let us bury him! The negro is free."

CHAPTER VIII

Consolidation

By the time Queen Victoria came to the throne, Baptists were ready for a great advance. They had struggled out of the Slough of Despond, the population of the country was increasing rapidly, and the nation was still deeply religious. "No one," it has been well said,[1] "will ever understand Victorian England who does not appreciate that among the highly civilized, in contradistinction to more primitive, countries it was one of the most religious that the world has known." That Baptists had made good use of their opportunities was made clear by the religious census taken by the Registrar-General in 1851. It revealed that whereas in 1801 they had only 652 buildings and 176,692 sittings, in 1851 they had 2,789 buildings and 752,343 sittings. This expansion, specially marked in the new industrial districts, continued during the second half of the century, which was remarkable for the growing desire for a more effective union among the churches and the development of a clear denominational consciousness.

From many points of view the most important event in Baptist history during the Victorian era was the fusion, which took place in 1891, between the Particular Baptists and the General Baptists of the New Connexion. The underlying causes of this union are as important as the union itself, and must here be set out, if we are to understand how it became possible for two bodies to unite which had hitherto been kept aloof from each other by doctrinal

[1] Ensor, *England*, 1870–1914, p. 137. See also Trevelyan, *English Social History*, pp. 509 ff.

differences. "Starting from different theological and geographical centres, fed and nourished on a different theological diet," they came together, said John Clifford, "slowly, shyly and surely." Their gradual approximation to each other is deeply interesting to the historian and may afford guidance for further fusions yet to come. It is set out here in some detail because the story has never been told in full, and also because its telling will, of necessity, bring out all the main movements of thought and practice among both types of Baptists during the Victorian era. Moreover, it has often been misunderstood, as for example by J. C. Carlile, who said summarily that "the reasons for their standing aloof ceased to exist when Unitarian Baptists withdrew from the denomination."[1] Actually the chief causes which led to the fusion were three: (1) the further decline of Calvinism among the Particular Baptists; (2) the growth of the practice of open-communion among both parties; (3) the development of the Baptist Union which provided them with a common platform.

(1) The breakdown of Calvinism among the Particular Baptists was an indispensable pre-requisite to the fusion of 1891, for the members of the New Connexion would never have entered into a union which muffled the three notes they gloried in sounding and which they called the three great universals: God loves all men, Christ died for all men, the Holy Spirit strives with all men. During the nineteenth century it became increasingly clear that Fullerism could be only a half-way house in the advance of the Particular Baptists from the prison-house of hyper-Calvinism and that the logical corollary of the offer of the Gospel to all men was a universal Atonement. The success of the Wesleyan Revival had spread Arminianism far and wide. More and more Particular Baptist ministers, under the influence of the spirit of the time and of the work of their Missionary Society, lost their interest in the Calvinistic scheme of doctrine. Many no longer felt able to avow belief in a restricted Atonement, now that they were preaching as if no such restriction existed. They agreed with Robert Hall[2] that only belief in a

[1] *The Story of the English Baptists*, p. 170. [2] *Works*, Vol. VI, p. 118.

General Redemption would justify an appeal to all men. Older men, who were tutors in the colleges, might advise their students to read Elisha Cole's *Divine Sovereignty* but all in vain. Some of the younger men had, however, a hard struggle for a time with congregations accustomed to hearing the characteristic doctrines of Calvinism systematically expounded. When, for instance, Charles Williams (*d.* 1907) went to Accrington straight from the Newport Pagnell Academy, his Calvinism was not nearly high enough for some, who hived off to form another church. After thirteen years Williams left Accrington but he returned in 1869 to renew the battle and to become the acknowledged leader of Lancashire Baptists. A sermon on "Esau, the non-elect," belonging to his early years, reveals the conflict both in his own mind and with some of his people.

> I take my stand (he said) with the extremest Calvinist, with the late Mr. Gadsby for instance, and I say that God has elected some souls to be His. . . . At the same time I take my stand with the extremest Arminian, with good John Wesley for instance, and I say that there is room in the heart of God for all, that there is provision in the work of Christ for all.

Augustine Birrell, who was the son of C. M. Birrell, shortly to be mentioned, says that Calvinism "had become incredible in Liverpool in the 'sixties of the last century." "In the trust-deeds, there the Doctrines were standing bold and erect with French and Caledonian precision—but in the Chapel—how little you heard of them! They were never indeed pronounced incredible, but with one or two occasional exceptions they were ignored and consequently forgotten."[1]

Charles Haddon Spurgeon always claimed to be a Calvinist. In the first sermon he preached, as a boy of sixteen, he declared, "I know that I was chosen of God in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world." His mind was soaked in the writings of the Puritan divines; but his intense zeal for the conversion of souls led him to step outside the bounds of the creed he had

[1] *Things Past Redress*, p. 10. See pp. 26 ff. for Birrell's two sisters who married two brothers, William and Edward Medley, both well-known Baptist ministers.

inherited. His sermon on "Compel them to come in" was criticised as Arminian and unsound. To his critics he replied:

> "Brethren, it is a small matter to me to be judged of men's judgment, for my Master set His seal on that message. I never preached a sermon by which so many souls were won to God. . . . I am as firm a believer in the doctrines of grace as any man living, and a true Calvinist after the order of John Calvin himself; but if it be thought an evil thing to bid the sinner lay hold of eternal life, I will yet be more evil in this respect, and herein imitate my Lord and His apostles. . . . Beloved friends, cling to the great truth of electing love and divine sovereignty, but let not these bind you in fetters when, in the power of the Holy Ghost, you become fishers of men."

More than once Spurgeon prayed "Lord, hasten to bring in all Thine elect, and then elect some more." He seems to have used this phrase often in conversation, and on his lips it was no mere badinage. With its definite rejection of a limited atonement, it would have horrified John Calvin. Towards the end of his life, Spurgeon said to Archbishop Benson, "I'm a very bad Calvinist, quite a Calvinist—I look on to the time when the elect will be all the world." The Archbishop was mystified and commented in his diary, "This I don't understand, I fear."[1] The truth seems to be that the old Calvinistic phrases were often on Spurgeon's lips but the genuine Calvinistic meaning had gone out of them. This explains the attacks made upon him, as soon as he began his ministry in London, by those who had never departed from an unadulterated Calvinism and the principle of close-communion. *The Earthen Vessel* asked, "Whose servant is he? What proof does he give that, instrumentally, his is a heart-searching, a Christ-exalting, a truth-unfolding, a sinner-converting, a church-feeding, a soul-saving ministry?" James Wells, the pastor of a Gospel Standard church in South London, expressed his doubts as to the genuineness of the young man's conversion and his fears that his hearers were destined to be fatally deluded. As Spurgeon's sermons appeared each Thursday, James Wells criticised their theology from his pulpit on the following Sunday. We need not labour the point any further. J. C. Carlile admits

[1] A. C. Benson, *The Life of Edward White Benson*, Vol. II, p. 276.

that "illogical as it may seem, Spurgeon's Calvinism was of such a character that while he proclaimed the majesty of God he did not hesitate to ascribe freedom of will to man and to insist that any man might find in Jesus Christ deliverance from the power of sin."[1]

It is worth noting that, in 1861, the London Baptist ministers, meeting in their Fraternal, known as The Baptist Board, "after much prayer" deleted the word "Particular" and admitted the General Baptist, John Clifford. "Since then, it has afforded a spiritual home to every evangelical Baptist minister."[2]

(2) The question of open *versus* closed communion continued to trouble the Particular Baptists, many of whose churches in the nineteenth century followed the lead of Robert Hall. Sometimes the change was made without difficulty, but in other cases much feeling was aroused. The oldest church in Liverpool was split by this issue in 1838. Those who desired open-communion called Charles Mitchell Birrell (1811–1880) to the pastorate and built Pembroke Chapel, which was received at once into the Association. The mother church, however, became more and more conservative and finally left the Association. In Suffolk the reply of Elven and his followers to the withdrawal of the Strict and Particular Baptists from the Suffolk and Norfolk Association was the foundation in 1846 of the Suffolk Baptist Union, which took into fellowship two churches which hitherto had been ostracized on account of their open-communion views.[3] In London, C. H. Spurgeon lent the weight of his enormous influence to those who favoured open-communion. The trust-deeds of the Metropolitan Tabernacle (1861) provided that it "shall be lawful for the members of the church or society to admit to the communion of the Lord's Supper (but not to church-membership) any persons professing repentance towards God, and faith in and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ, although such person may not have been baptized by immersion."[4] Spurgeon was a little nonplussed, for once, when an American

[1] *C. H. Spurgeon*, pp. 289 ff.
[2] Whitley, B.L., p. 93.
[3] Klaiber, *op. cit.*, pp. 144 ff.
[4] See also Carlile, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

divine commented, "Which means that they are good enough for the Lord, and yet not good enough for you!"

In one case the question provoked so much feeling that the dispute was settled only after an appeal to law. In 1833, the members of the St. Mary's Church, Norwich, called William Brock (1807–1875) to succeed Joseph Kinghorn. Brock informed them that he held open-communion views, but they replied that such views were not inconsistent with his acceptance of the pastorate, so long as he did not preach against strict communion. There were, however, many pedobaptists in the congregation and some church members were "distressed by our exclusion of the Lord's people from the Lord's Supper." In 1838, Brock was absolved from his pledge and, for a time, administered Communion to unbaptized Christians in his own house. In 1845, however, he instituted two monthly Communion services: one on the first Sunday in the month restricted to those baptized as believers and the other on the third Sunday which was open to all believers. He hoped that this expedient would satisfy the consciences of both parties. He said at the time: "Of course it would be quite possible to render such a plan an occasion of vexation and strife. If, forgetful of the injunction to forbear one another in love, brethren should insinuate bigotry on the one hand and latitudinarianism on the other, the proposed arrangement would fail." His fears were not groundless and, in 1848, he left Norwich to become the first pastor of the Bloomsbury Church, London. The St. Mary's Church then called George Gould (1818–1882) who made no secret of his open-communion views. Under his leadership the church, in 1857, made another change and decided to open its normal Communion service to all believers and to institute a special service for those who "conscientiously object to commune with unbaptized believers at the table of the Lord." Immediately many who were in favour of strict-communion withdrew and formed a separate congregation. One of the trustees instituted a suit in the courts, claiming possession of the property of the church on the ground that the provisions of its trust-deeds had been violated. The case, which

lasted four days, was heard in 1860 by the Master of the Rolls, from whose judgment we cite the following passage:

> . . . in all matters, at least in all matters not being fundamental, it was part of the constitution and essence of each Church or Congregation of Particular Baptists that they might regulate their practice as they thought fit. The inference is irresistible, that, as the principle of Free or Mixed Communion was not a fundamental point of faith, the practice must be subject to the regulation of each Church or Congregation. . . . I am of opinion, therefore, that this Congregation is at full liberty to alter its practice in respect of Communion, if such should be the opinion of the majority of its full members.[1]

Gould, who had antiquarian tastes and had prepared his case carefully, had no difficulty in showing that, from the beginning, there had been Particular Baptist churches which practised open-communion, and that some had been of the open-membership type. The trust-deeds of the St. Mary's Church made no specific reference to either practice.

One argument frequently stressed by the advocates of closed-communion was, of course, that the admission of unbaptized persons to the Lord's Supper was bound in time to lead to their being admitted into full membership of the church. This forecast proved to be correct. In Manchester an open-membership church was formed in 1842 to which Alexander Maclaren ministered from 1858 to 1903. In Leeds, in 1848, Blenheim Chapel was founded on the same basis. In London, Regent's Park Chapel, of which William Landels, in 1855, became the first minister, also received into fellowship unbaptized persons upon profession of their faith; and many Baptists regarded Landels as being lax in his teaching of distinctive Baptist principles.[2] But Landels was one of the London leaders who helped to found, in 1865, the present London Baptist Association, which accepted open-membership churches into fellowship. The other leaders were Spurgeon, Brock, Angus, Stovel, and Clifford.[3] When Charles

[1] Gould, *Open Communion and the Baptists of Norwich*, pp. 319 ff.

[2] Payne (*The Fellowship of Believers*, pp. 68 ff.) prints extracts from the Constitution of the Downs Chapel, Clapton, established in 1869, on the open-membership principle.

[3] See Whitley, B.L., pp. 80 ff., and *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. IX. pp. 109 ff. for the earlier London Strict Baptist Association, 1846—1853.

Williams, in 1874, moved the old Accrington Church to its present home on Cannon Street, the new trust-deeds made it lawful for the members of the church, "if they shall so choose," to admit unbaptized persons to both communion and church membership. It should be added that these open-membership churches were required to have a Baptist as their minister and that the only form of baptism permitted was that of believers by immersion. Writing five years later, Williams candidly admitted that "the overwhelming majority" of Baptist churches made baptism a condition of membership, and that the Church of the apostolic age and the great Churches of Christendom did not admit the unbaptized to communion at the Lord's Table or to church membership. He defended open-communion by saying that "the faith which entitles to baptism no less entitles to a seat at the Lord's table"; and open-membership by an appeal to "the general principle, which is accepted and acted upon by all Baptists, that a church has the right and ought to determine its own membership."[1]

In London these changes appear to have been accepted without provoking much opposition. In 1841, however, a number of London Baptists met at Eagle Street with the idea of forming a Strict Communion Society. They did not feel drawn to the followers of Gadsby but they felt some affinity with the Strict and Particular Baptists of Suffolk, whom they invited to send representatives to the meeting. A little later the society was renamed "The Baptist Evangelical Society." Its object was to stand for "the essential and fundamental principles of the Gospel of Christ, which the apostles proclaimed under the immediate inspection of the Spirit." The Society sent a missionary to Germany and another to Denmark; and published tracts and *The Primitive Church Magazine*. It also trained men for the ministry by the old method of placing them under the care of "a ministering brother whom the committee may deem suitable for so important a work, for . . . a period of three years more or less." London Baptists took no great interest in the Society whose

[1] Williams, *Principles and Practices of the Baptists*, pp. 64, 66, 78 f.

chief supporters were in the North. Among them was John Stock (1817–1884), twice pastor of the Salendine Nook Church, Huddersfield, which he trained so thoroughly in close-communion principles that it did not admit unbaptized believers to the Lord's Table until about 1940. The Northern supporters of the Society founded, in 1866,[1] a new college which was first housed in Chamber Hall, Bury, and moved, in 1872, to Manchester in order to take advantage of the facilities provided by Owens College, now the University of Manchester. The constitution of the college revealed the aims of its founders:

> The President and Professors shall hold substantially such doctrinal views as are enunciated in the Baptist Confesssion of Faith, adopted by the Ministers and Messengers of the General Assembly which met in London in 1689; and shall also maintain that Baptism on a profession of Faith is necessary to Church Fellowship and Communion at the Lord's Table.

The college provided a rallying point in the North for those who wished to retain Calvinism and closed communion and who disliked what they called the latitudinarianism of Samuel Gosnell Green who had followed Acworth as the president of Rawdon College. These had formed themselves, in 1860, into the North-Western Association,[2] leaving the Lancashire and Cheshire Association. They did not, however, isolate themselves from the other churches or from the general work of the denomination. The separate Association came to an end in 1875, when the seceding churches rejoined the Lancashire and Cheshire Association, bringing with them Manchester College. Both parties had agreed to accept variety in practice as to communion and few were left for whom Calvinism meant anything really vital.

Yorkshire Baptists were so unused to the idea of an open-membership church that the Yorkshire Association refused to receive Blenheim Chapel, Leeds, into membership. "Subsequent

[1] An earlier attempt of the conservatives to found an academy at Accrington, with Joseph Harbottle and David Griffiths as tutors, had lasted only eight years and closed in 1849.

[2] See Whitley, *The Baptists of North-West England*, pp. 203, 215 ff.

applications were also refused, and the refusals led to acrimonious discussion and division. But the question could not be put aside. It was found that the isolation of this Church made denominational arrangements exceedingly difficult, and led to friction. At last, a compromise . . . that 'only baptized members of the Church should be recognized' was accepted by the Committee and in 1887 on this understanding the Church was welcomed into the Association and a long and bitter controversy ended."[1]

Among the General Baptists the passage from close- to open-communion does not appear to have caused much trouble. The New Connexion had begun in 1770 as a close-communionist body, as one of their Articles of Religion shows:

> We believe that it is the indispensable duty of all who repent and believe the Gospel, to be baptized, by immersion in water, in order to be initiated into a church state; and that no person ought to be received into the church without submission to that ordinance.

Exactly a hundred years later, the following note was added: "Most of the churches have now Free Communion, and some of them Open Fellowship."

In the New Connexion, John Clifford was a consistent advocate of open-membership. The Constitution drawn up by him for the Westbourne Park Chapel, opened in 1877, contains the following statement, which contrasts strongly with the Article just quoted:

> The Church teaches that Baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is the privilege of each believer in the Saviour. Every applicant for membership is urged to consider the Lord's will on this subject, but the rule followed is "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," and act according to his judgment of the Master's teaching. The whole question is left to the individual conscience.[2]

Thus the movement among Baptist churches towards open-membership grew in strength, with the result that to-day most of the churches in London and the South follow this practice, holding that sincere faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the one and

[1] *The Baptists of Yorkshire*, p. 313. [2] Marchant, *Dr. John Clifford*, p. 45.

only condition they are justified by Scripture in demanding in those who seek church-fellowship with them. In the North, however, the movement has made little headway. Few churches in Yorkshire, for example, have opened their membership. The returns of baptized and unbaptized members are supposed to be carefully separated in the statistics of the Association, which has, however, moved in two directions. For some years at its annual Assembly it has held a Communion service at which presumably unbaptized members of the Assembly may be present as communicants. Fortunate in the possession of excellent funds for the work of church extension, it has been compelled to make some of its new churches of the open-membership type in order to implement the understanding which now obtains among the Free Churches that if one of them plants a church in a new district, the others will not enter into competition with it. But the fact remains that not a few Yorkshire Baptists are reluctant to give the name Baptist to a church which contains unbaptized members.

The important point for our immediate purpose is that the growth of open-communion and open-membership among both types of Baptists made it unnatural and illogical for them to remain apart, when both were receiving unbaptized members into their churches. Moreover, both ministers and members were now passing freely from one body to the other. When, for example, the new church at Ferme Park, Hornsey, was promoted by the New Connexion, its first pastor was Charles Brown, who had been trained at the Particular Baptist College at Bristol and had served the rather old-fashioned Calvinistic church at Nailsworth.

(3) We must now indicate the manner in which the Baptist Union provided both Particular and General Baptists with a common meeting-ground and opportunities of fraternization with each other. This will necessitate a sketch of the growth and development of the Union. In our last chapter something was said about the foundation of the Baptist Union in 1813, and we noted Ivimey's lament, in 1830, that the venture he had

sponsored had come to so little. "It suffered in two respects; it inherited the outworn methods of the eighteenth century . . . it had no practical aim, no permanent officers, no inspiring leader."[1] In 1831, however, an attempt was made at re-organization. The Union now welcomed into its fellowship churches of the New Connexion, and elected two of their ministers (J. G. Pike and Jabez Burns) to its Chair. The leaders seemed determined to fling their net as widely as possible and welcomed churches which the Associations would not receive. Nearly forty years were to elapse before the Yorkshire Association received Blenheim Chapel, Leeds, into its fellowship but the Baptist Union received it within two years of its foundation. An attempt was also made to enlist the interest of the provincial churches by occasional meetings in the Provinces. But the re-organization of 1831 produced few tangible results. In 1846, for example, the Union met in Birmingham, when its income for the year was £133 and only forty-two brethren were present, though it had a committee of thirty-nine members. When it met in London two years later, sixty-two representatives were present and the income was a little over £90. In its jubilee year (1863), John Howard Hinton (1791–1873) from the Chair (which he had occupied before in 1837) delivered what was virtually his swan-song, in which he said that there was no union among Baptists, there never had been and never would be. "The income for all purposes was only £90, and there was no practical programme beyond the gathering statistics and holding one meeting a year."[2] In the same year, Hinton resigned the pastorate of the Devonshire Square Church and returned to his former charge at Reading, giving most of his time to preparing a collected edition of his works in seven volumes, in which he wrought out a theological system peculiarly his own. In fairness to him, it should be said that to his perseverance as secretary was due the preservation of the Baptist Union in its feeble days.[3]

[1] Whitley, H.B.B., pp. 205 ff. Difficulties of travel in those days should also be kept in mind. [2] Whitley, H.B.B., p. 314.

[3] For Hinton see Carlile, *The Story of the English Baptists*, pp. 222 ff. He appears in the D.N.B. with his son, James, the surgeon, and philosophical writer.

The jubilee year of the Baptist Union marked, however, an important point in its development. A real attempt was then made to increase its effectiveness and usefulness. More than half the elected members of the committee lived in London, and the provincial churches were pressing for a larger representation and urging a more progressive policy. Hinton was provided with a co-secretary in James Henry Millard (1819–1883), who was a busy pastor at Huntingdon with the oversight of eight village churches. The committee now met quarterly and arranged for two Assemblies yearly, one in London and the other in the Provinces. At the instigation of Charles Williams and others, the Union became responsible for an Annuity Fund for aged ministers, to which C. M. Birrell contributed £500. An Augmentation Fund was raised to assist the weaker churches. Both funds witness to the growth of a corporate spirit among the churches. In 1863, the slow process of centralization may be said to have begun. Millard was followed in 1877 by Samuel Harris Booth (1824–1902), who served the Union as secretary for twenty-one years, except for a brief interval. He was virtually the first whole-time secretary, and during his tenure of office, the fusion of Particular and General Baptists was carried through. One of the contributory factors to the fusion was, without a doubt, the growing usefulness of the Baptist Union and the opportunity it provided both parties of getting to know each other better. They had shared in its work, spoken together at its meetings and had been elected to its Chair. Moreover, the representatives of the New Connexion had been given an opportunity of expounding their doctrinal position at the meetings of the Union.

Apparently the first time that fusion was tentatively hinted at was in 1857, when the Baptist Union met in Nottingham, in the heart of the district where the New Connexion churches were numerous and influential. It had been invited to meet in the midland city by the Association of the New Connexion, "with the avowed desire of cultivating an enlarged fraternal fellowship." At the public meeting the following resolution was passed:

That this meeting, consisting largely of ministers and members of churches connected with the General and Particular Baptist denominations, gratefully acknowledges the vital unity which prevails among them, through their common regard to "one Lord, one faith, one baptism"; and rejoices in this opportunity of cultivating and expressing their sincere mutual love.

In 1864, William Underwood (1812–1898), Principal of the Chilwell College, expounded the principles of the New Connexion at a meeting of the Baptist Union. The same year, James Phillippo Mursell (1800–1885), whose ministry in Leicester had brought him into close touch with General Baptists, suggested from the Chair of the Union "the supercession on safe and sound principles of the distinction between General and Particular Baptists." When, in 1870, the New Connexion celebrated its centenary and reported that it had 153 churches and 20,488 members,[1] William Underwood remarked from the Chair that one-sixth of their recognized pastors came direct from Particular Baptist Colleges or Churches. He said:

"The union of Baptists is especially to be sought. I mean a much closer one than now exists. For our present semi-separate state is neither satisfactory nor seemly. No doubt we have our distinctive opinions still, but they are so seldom made prominent that the bulk of the people do not understand them. For all practical ends what might be called the Calvinism of one party is exactly the same as the supposed Arminianism of the other. What doctrinal sentiments have been expressed from the Chair of the Baptist Union Meetings (which has nearly always been filled by a Particular Baptist) which might not have been uttered with equal approval from the Chair of the General Baptist Associations? What measures for purely religious purposes have been devised by the other Baptists, which we could not as heartily have adopted? And when pulpits have been exchanged, or special services shared by ministers of both sections, what impartial hearer could detect any theological difference in the sermons and speeches?"

Thereafter, the leaders on both sides almost vied with each other in their declarations that nothing really vital kept the two bodies apart. In 1873, J. C. Pike, the secretary of the Missionary Society of the New Connexion, said that he could contemplate

[1] These figures do not include the churches and members of the Orissa Mission. The centre of the New Connexion was still in the Midlands. There were nineteen English counties without an evangelical General Baptist church.

"a complete amalgamation of the two sections of the Baptist body." The next year, Clement Bailhache, one of the secretaries of the Baptist Missionary Society, spoke at the annual Missionary Meeting of the New Connexion, and said that he did not know why he was not a General Baptist, seeing that he had married one and that his first invitation to settle in the ministry had come from one of their churches. In the same year, Joseph Angus gave the charge to the minister and offered the ordination prayer, when Dawson Burns was ordained as co-pastor with his father of the New Connexion Church in Church Street, New Edgware Road. In the early seventies it looked as if amalgamation might take place almost immediately. In point of fact it did not come till 1891, because it was necessary to convince the rank and file of both bodies. In Lancashire there were those "who hesitated to wheel into line with the New Connexion, and a general union was delayed till northern scruples could be allayed."[1] A check to the movement towards fusion came in 1873 when the Editor of the Baptist Union Handbook, in an unguarded moment, wrote that the General Baptists of the New Connexion had "seceded from the larger body more than a century ago"; and, in the next year, *The Baptist* suggested that there were some Calvinists in the churches of the New Connexion. These utterances aroused John Clifford who was not prepared to accept Calvinism on any terms as a condition of union. He at once wrote an article in the *General Baptist Magazine*,[2] which he was then editing, to make it plain that the New Connexion was not prepared to abandon its distinctive beliefs. Speaking of its ministers he said, "we were never further from Calvinism than we are to-day." The students in the New Connexion College (Chilwell), he said, were taught that "a theology which makes the sovereignty of power rather than of love, the cardinal and all-determining feature of the Divine Nature is contrary to the Spirit of Christ and to the teaching of the New Testament." He added: "Much as we would sacrifice for the doctrine of

[1] Whitley, *The Baptists of North-West England*, p. 237.
[2] Vol. lxxvi, pp. 451 ff.

believers' baptism we would go much further in the same direction for the proclamation of an utterly unrestricted atonement." He concluded by saying: "Speaking for ourselves as General Baptists, we do not doubt that we are doing more work for Christ and men, in the state in which we now are, than by any change that has been suggested." There were some in the New Connexion who liked the compactness of their small denomination and the opportunity thus afforded for personal knowledge and intercourse. They were by no means certain that these advantages would be preserved in one large, united Baptist body. Happily all difficulties were at length overcome, and the General Baptists came to feel that their testimony to the truth that Christ "tasted death for every man" had been so universally accepted by all associated with the Baptist Union that their existence as a separate denomination was no longer necessary. In 1886, Charles Williams from the Chair of the Union made a strong plea for fusion; and the next year both the Council and Assembly of the Union passed resolutions in favour of amalgamation into one denomination and referred the matter to the local Associations, nearly all of whom replied in favourable terms. In 1891, the Association of the New Connexion met at Burnley, with Clifford, who was now its leader, in the Chair, and it was resolved by an overwhelming majority to "accept the invitation offered." No confession of faith was asked for or given by either party. The two Missionary Societies and Building Funds were also amalgamated and thereafter the New Connexion churches were received into the local Associations. Thus was consummated a union anticipated by Stinton and Crosby, one hundred and fifty years before. It has been such a complete success that very few Baptists to-day know what once constituted the difference between Particular and General Baptists. The adjectives have now been dropped.

At this point, more light will be thrown upon Baptist life during the Victorian era, if we say something in more detail about the three leaders who towered above all others: Spurgeon, the Puritan pastor evangelist; Clifford, the prophet of social

righteousness; and Maclaren, the expository preacher. Their careers will illustrate some of the different strains which have blended in the modern denomination.

After the lapse of fifty years, and now that the controversy he aroused in Baptist circles has died down, it is possible to formulate an impartial judgment of Spurgeon. There can now be no doubt about his genius and greatness, and the tremendous range of his influence. In his lifetime he almost dominated Baptist life, especially in London and the South, where his influence still abides. He has, however, been unfortunate in his biographers. One lays down the official biography in four volumes, compiled by his wife and one of his secretaries, feeling thankful that it never fell into the hands of Lytton Strachey, for him to include Spurgeon among his eminent Victorians. In 1920, however, Dr. W. Y. Fullerton produced his admirable *C. H. Spurgeon, a Biography;* and in 1933, Dr. J. C. Carlile his *C. H. Spurgeon, an Interpretative Biography*, which is slightly marred by too many digressions. Both these books should be read by all Baptists who, like the present writer, were not brought up in the Spurgeonite tradition and are, therefore, liable to under-estimate Spurgeon's real greatness. In what follows I am greatly indebted to them. For a more critical estimate, the student may turn to Brastow's *Representative Preachers* (1904).

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892) was born at Kelvedon in Essex of dissenting stock. Both his father and grandfather were Independent ministers. Converted in his sixteenth year, he joined the Congregational church at Newmarket; but, being convinced that a believer should be baptized before he made his first Communion, he sought out a Baptist minister who baptized him in the river at Isleham Ferry. "I did not," he said in later life, "fulfil the outward ordinance to join a party, and to become a Baptist, but to be a Christian after the apostolic fashion; for they, when they believed, were baptized." The Sunday following his baptism he participated in the Communion service of the Newmarket Independent Church. He soon moved to Cambridge as an usher in a school, and there joined the St. Andrew's

Street Baptist Church. In 1851, the church at Waterbeach called him as its pastor. "In a short time the little thatched chapel was crammed, the biggest vagabonds of the village were weeping floods of tears, and those who had been the curse of the parish became its blessing." An old minister approvingly said of him at that time that he was "the sauciest dog that ever barked in a pulpit." He was not twenty when John Rippon's church, which had moved from Carter Lane to New Park Street when its meeting-house was demolished to widen the road to London Bridge, called him after due trial to its pastorate. The first time he preached at New Park Street, the chapel which accommodated 1,200 persons contained a congregation of about 80 people. Almost immediately Spurgeon's preaching filled it to overflowing. Exeter Hall was taken and it, too, was crowded. A move was made, with the same result, to the Surrey Music Hall which was capable of holding more than 10,000 people. The rustic youth, whose blue pocket-handkerchief with white spots had been tactfully replaced by a present from his deacons of a dozen in white, had become almost in a night, London's most popular preacher. At a special service held at the Crystal Palace, on the day of national humiliation on account of the Indian Mutiny, he preached to 23,654 persons, counted in at the turnstiles. Finally, in 1861, the Metropolitan Tabernacle was built for him, at a cost of over £30,000, and there he preached to the end of his life, to congregations of five thousand and more, numbering Ruskin among his hearers and Gladstone on one occasion. The preacher was the attraction; there was no organ and the singing was led by a precentor. At the end of 1891, the membership of the church stood at 5,311. Spurgeon used to say that there was not a seat in the Tabernacle but somebody had been converted on it. When he died, no fewer than sixty thousand persons paid homage to him, as he lay in state in the Tabernacle.

From the beginning of his ministry in London, Spurgeon's sermons were printed, translated into other languages and read all over the world. They ran into sixty-three volumes in the

regular series: of the weekly sermons more than a hundred millions have been sold. It was an age in which sermons were sold in large numbers, as well as listened to with rapt attention. Commenting on these sales, the latest historian of the period says:[1] "By far the largest were those of C. H. Spurgeon . . . who, if native eloquence and wide appeal be the test, must be ranked among the greatest English preachers of any age."

Many attempts have been made to lay bare the secret of Spurgeon's astounding success. It certainly did not lie in his personal appearance. Fat and stocky, with a face unexpressive in repose, though very different in action, he was not an impressive figure. "O my plump, my rosy Spurgeon," was the refrain of a popular ballad when first he came to London. But he had considerable physical vigour and his heavy face was often illuminated by a radiant smile. His voice was superb, as clear as a bell; and he knew how to use it so that not a syllable was lost. He had, moreover, amazing gifts of speech, having no difficulty whatever in clothing his thoughts in clear, direct, simple language, which left no doubt as to his meaning. All his sermons reveal remarkable gifts of oratorical amplification. With consummate ease he could, by direct statement or some kind of allusion, repeat the same suggestion a score of times or more.[2] Though self-educated, he had real mental ability. "He could grasp the bearings of a subject, hold his theme well in hand, and display his thought like troops in a tactical movement." His letters, too, reveal his mastery of language. These natural gifts, which he was at pains to develop, explain much. Moreover, it must be remembered that his style of preaching was new. Though both matter and style were biblical, there was a directness in Spurgeon's sermons which marks them off at once from those of his immediate predecessors in London pulpits. They often made eloquence their primary object; he made it his aim to present the Gospel in such a way that it would strike home at once. He introduced a new note of realism into the

[1] Ensor, *England*, 1870–1914, p. 140, note 2. Writing of the country parish he served in the 'eighties, Bishop Knox said "Spurgeon's sermons I found in many homes, Newman's not in one" (*The Tractarian Movement*, p. x).

[2] cf. Thouless, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, pp. 150 ff.

pulpit. "He substituted naturalness for a false and stilted dignity, passion for precision, plain homely Saxon for highly-Latinised English, humour and mother-wit for apathy and sleepiness, glow and life for machinery and death."[1] When Spurgeon died, a sporting paper remarked that "one of the first circumstances prepossessing the auditor in his favour was that he had no Sunday voice."

Robertson Nicoll maintained that Spurgeon's Calvinism was attractive in "the damp, low-lying, thickly peopled, struggling regions of South London"—the poorest part of the Metropolis. He wrote:

> Mr. Spurgeon's hearers had many of them missed all the prizes of life; but God did not choose them for reasons that move man's preference, else their case was hopeless. Their election was of grace. And as He chose them, He would keep them. The perseverance of the saints is a doctrine without meaning to the majority of Christians. But many a poor girl with the love of Christ and goodness in her heart, working her fingers to the bone for a pittance that just keeps her alive, with the temptations of the streets around her, and the river beside her, listened with all her soul when she heard that Christ's sheep could never perish. Many a struggling tradesman tempted to dishonesty; many a widow with penury and loneliness before her, were lifted above all, taught to look through and over the years coming thick with sorrow and conflict, and anticipate a place in the Church Triumphant.[2]

There were, of course, other elements in Spurgeon's marvellous appeal to the common people. They appreciated his concrete habit of mind and his extraordinary skill in the use of illustrations. They saw in him one of themselves. He was the man they would like to have been. They appreciated, as if it were their own, his homely shrewdness, his refreshing humour, and even his inveterate habit of punning. His racy mother-wit and his powers of mimicry contrasted well with the austerities of his Calvinism. He was no sombre ascetic; and they liked a man who told them from the pulpit that he hoped that evening to smoke a cigar to the glory of God. They appreciated his independence and outspokenness, his combination of Christian idealism and realism, of bluff common-

[1] *The Christian World*, cited by Fullerton, *op. cit.*, p. 272.
[2] *Princes of the Church*, pp. 50 ff.

sense and unworldliness—all of which went back to the Dutch and Quaker strains in his ancestry. They delighted also in his complete freedom from cant and guile. They knew instinctively that he was utterly devoid of self-seeking and that religion was the prevailing and mastering motive of his life.

Above and beyond all these things, stand the vitality and the richness of Spurgeon's own religious experience. He knew men and understood them, but he preached nothing which he had not verified in his own experience. When he depicted the agonies and triumphs of the soul, it was his own experience he was describing. He did not repeat in his sermons the things about which he had read, but spoke what he had himself experienced and most intensely believed. Behind all his sermons there is the tremendous force that comes from conviction, and the consciousness that he came before men as an ambassador of God. The vitality of his own religious experience was contagious, and invested for those who heard him "all the facts of the Christian redemption with new and entrancing certainty." He had also what John Morley called "the taking gift of unction," as well as an apostolic yearning over the souls of men. For him the Gospel was either a converting force or nothing at all. Moreover, his confidence in God was absolute. This is the real reason why so many owed their souls to him; and it explains the remark of Lord Houghton: "When he mounted the pulpit you might have thought of him as a hairdresser's assistant; when he left it, he was an inspired apostle."

Spurgeon's splendid system of evangelistic, philanthropic and educational agencies is one of his lasting memorials. He had a profound sympathy with the poor and the unfortunate, but it is doubtful whether it ever occurred to him that a fundamental change in the social structure was needed. The political creed of Liberalism was good enough for him. Spurgeon's Orphanage is a monument to his own generosity and that of those he influenced. From the first it was open to all denominations, no canvassing was allowed and the children wore no distinctive dress. Spurgeon also took a great interest in the almshouses for old people provided by the church in Rippon's days and had them rebuilt. Before ele-

mentary education became a responsibility of the State, he established in the rooms under the Tabernacle an evening school, open to all and free of charge. These evening classes were continued from 1862 to 1899.[1] His College for the training of pastors was established as early as 1856 and by the time of his death had trained nearly nine hundred men for the ministry. To the objection that too many men were being trained and that some were of inferior quality, Spurgeon replied: "The muffs are the men who will preach; if you do not educate them, they will be worse than ever." He used to say that he would be content to get one first-class man out of every eight.[2] It is an indication of the breadth of his sympathies that the first principal of the college was a Congregationalist. The Metropolitan Tabernacle Colportage Association, founded in 1866, still continues its beneficent work. Its aim was to circulate "religious and healthy literature among all classes," by means of colporteurs who, being paid a fixed salary, were able to devote all their time to the work.

When one remembers the personal ascendancy which Spurgeon established over his followers and the flattery which they heaped upon him, it seems almost a miracle that he remained unspoiled. He soon lost the cocksureness of his youth and remained humble at heart—proud but never conceited. As a young man he escaped the snare which beset him, when he became London's most popular preacher; and he remained utterly sincere to the end. Perhaps it would have been better for him if he had mixed more with the great men of his time. Joseph Parker hinted at this in the egregious open letter which appeared in *The British Weekly* from his pen. Parker wrote:[3]

> Let me advise you to widen the circle of which you are the centre. You are surrounded by offerers of incense. They flatter your weakness, they laugh at your jokes, they feed you with compliments. My dear Spurgeon, you are too big a man for this. Take in more fresh air. Open your windows, even when the wind is in the East. Scatter your ecclesiastical harem. I do not say destroy

[1] Details in Carlile, *op. cit.*, pp. 64 ff. [2] Fullerton, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
[3] Cited by Fullerton, *op. cit.*, pp. 300 ff. Parker did not like Spurgeon's objection to receiving theatre-goers as church-members.

your circle, I simply say enlarge it. As with your circle so with your reading. Other men will write you in a vein of condolent flattery, and will hold up their riddled gingham to save you from the refreshing shower, but you know as well as I do that their good offices are meant for themselves and not for you.

But Spurgeon never lost his sturdy common-sense and his hatred of religious cant, as his comment on those who taught Christian perfection shows. Of them he said:[1]

They are chiefly half-pay officers and single women in good health and no cares. Let one of them have a touch of gout, and ring for something which is not brought at once, and see if there isn't a bit of devil left in them.

The fact that money had no attraction for Spurgeon is further evidence of his sincerity. His income from his publications must have been considerable. After he had been their pastor for twenty-five years, his people presented him with £6,476, the bulk of which he gave as an endowment for the almshouses connected with the church. The same thing happened again on his fiftieth birthday. It is said that "literally he gave away a fortune." "It became a tradition at the Tabernacle that the pastor never made an appeal for money without giving a subscription to the fund, and not infrequently he was the largest subscriber."[2] When he died, it was found that he had made provision for his widow, but there was very little more of which he had to dispose. True, he lived during the last twelve years of his life in the style of an affluent business man, in a large house, with gardens, lawns, a lake and some fields beyond. But a man who took little or no exercise and often worked eighteen hours a day, needed quiet and domestic comfort. Moreover, that kind of thing was almost expected at a time when the evangelical world regarded a man's material success as evidence that the blessing of God was resting upon him. Spurgeon was as genuinely convinced as any of his supporters that the Lord had given him his library, fernery, vinery, and rose-garden. In such matters he has been truly called "the last of the Victorians."

[1] Cited by Newman Hall, *An Autobiography*, p. 295.
[2] Carlile, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

To some it will seem that Spurgeon's ministry was lacking in a proper sense of awe in the Divine Presence. There were always those who spoke of his irreverence. Professor J. D. Everett of Queen's College, Belfast, a friend of Spurgeon's youth, once suggested to him that a man ought to feel and show some sense of awe in the presence of God. Spurgeon's reply was to the effect that such awe was foreign to his nature and that he felt perfectly at home with his Heavenly Father.[1] His communion with God was as simple as a child with its father. It was, indeed, almost impossible for the vast crowds at the services in the Tabernacle to gather with any deep sense of awe upon their spirits, save when Spurgeon prayed. When smaller men began to imitate him, they provided real excuse for those who criticized "the vulgarity of Dissent." Perhaps Spurgeon himself felt the lack, for he remarked to Archbishop Benson, "The High Church have this great merit; they make all their people reverent."[2] But ordered forms of worship had no attraction for him. When he came to New Park Street, the deacons were anxious that he should be properly ordained, as his predecessors had been. He objected to such a service on the ground that his ministry had been recognized by God and, therefore, required no further authorization. "He believed every church had a right to choose its own minister, and certainly needed no assistance from others in appointing him to the office."[3] If the church pressed the point, he was, he said, willing to submit, "but it will be a submission. I shall endure it as a self-mortification in order that you may all be pleased." He never was ordained. Perhaps it is not fanciful to trace back to his example that casualness about ordinations which affected the Baptist ministry for some years.

No account of Spurgeon would be complete without some reference to the two controversies in which he was involved: the controversy over Baptismal Regeneration and the Down Grade controversy. The latter is best dealt with in connexion with the life of Clifford. The former originated in a sermon preached by

[1] Fullerton, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
[2] A. C. Benson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 276.
[3] Carlile, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

Spurgeon in 1864 in which he denounced as superstitious the notion that baptism is capable of regenerating its recipients. The following quotation will indicate his uncompromising language:

> Of all the lies which have dragged millions down to hell, I look upon this as being the most atrocious—that in a Protestant Church there should be found those who swear that baptism saves a soul. Call a man a Baptist, or a Presbyterian, or a Dissenter, or a Churchman, that is nothing to me; if he says that baptism saves a soul, out upon him, out upon him; he states what God never taught, what the Bible never laid down, and what ought never to be maintained by men who profess that the Bible, and the whole Bible, is the religion of Protestants.

Before he preached the sermon, Spurgeon warned his publishers that he was about to destroy the circulation of his printed sermons. He was mistaken; a quarter of a million copies of this sermon were sold. From the other side came a blizzard of sermons and pamphlets. While the sermon delighted the High Church Party by its frank avowal that the Prayer Book taught the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, it deeply offended the Evangelicals who had, a few years before, won a victory for their point of view in the celebrated Gorham case. Speaking of the Evangelicals, Spurgeon said: "I impeach before the bar of universal Christendom these men, who, knowing that baptism does not regenerate, yet declare in public that it does." Lord Shaftesbury was so offended that he said of Spurgeon, "Sir, I believe that you are very ignorant; to say the truth, you are a very saucy fellow. . . ." After that, Spurgeon felt it necessary to resign from the Evangelical Alliance which drew much of its support from Evangelical Churchmen. "Spurgeon's controversial writings," says one of his admirers,[1] "are the poorest of all his work. . . . The sermon on 'Baptismal Regeneration' is a powerful piece of composition, but it owed its enormous circulation to the subject rather than to the method of presentation."

John Clifford (1836–1923) was only two years younger than Spurgeon but the two men really belonged to different generations. Firm friends, they differed theologically and in many other

[1] J. C. Carlile, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

ways—not least in their physical appearance. Clifford's frame was spare and wiry. His head was "all brow and eyebrow, animalism clean gone, spirituality paramount. . . . Two deep hatchet-marks of thought between the half-quenched eyes; square unyielding beard greying and whitening. Nose sharp, eagerly sensitive, ears large and alert, mouth beautiful but hard as steel . . . the mouth of a man-at-arms, made for words of fire."[1] Clifford was the son of a factory-worker and was born at Sawley in Derbyshire. He began to work in a lace-factory as a jacker-off before he was twelve. In his nineteenth year he entered the Leicester College of the New Connexion of General Baptists, and, at the age of twenty-two, settled as the pastor of their church in Praed Street, Paddington. His thirst for knowledge was so insatiable that he made it a condition of his acceptance of the pastorate that he should be allowed to continue his studies at University College. He graduated in London University in Arts, Science, and Law, but never allowed anything to come between him and his pastoral duties. During the first year of his pastorate, seventy-three persons were added to, or restored to, the church, which he made one of the first "institutional" churches in London. The chapel was enlarged and, in 1877, a new building, Westbourne Park Chapel, was erected in Porchester Road, Bayswater, where Clifford continued to minister till 1915, making it a hive of activity. His ministry was specially attractive to young people for reasons that are well set out by William Ernest Blomfield (1862–1934) who was among those attracted. He mentions Clifford's "broad interpretation of Evangelicalism, his appreciation of the work of Biblical scholarship, his resolute opposition to blind Conservatism, his repudiation of the antagonism between Religion and Science so often proclaimed by some in our own Church, and his steadfast adherence to the New Testament idea of the Church."[2] Many attempts were made to win Clifford away from Westbourne Park Church, but he remained loyal to his first love. After his retirement he gave

[1] A journalist's description quoted in Marchant, *Dr. John Clifford*, p. 94.
[2] Cited by Marchant, *op. cit.*, p. 111. Children, it should be noted, adored Clifford, as he adored them.

himself in old age to the Brotherhood Movement, becoming its president. He was twice president of the Baptist Union, the first president of the Baptist World Alliance, and also president of the National Free Church Council. In 1921, the King made him a Companion of Honour—a distinction which all his friends felt singularly appropriate. He died suddenly in the Council Chamber of the Baptist Church House, where he had been listening to speeches on personal evangelism and was intending to speak on the subject himself. The lamp of his faith had burned undimmed to the end. Within a few months of his death, his portrait was placed in the National Portrait Gallery.

By many, Clifford is remembered as "the uncrowned king of militant Nonconformity." The unclerical and anti-sacerdotal bent of his mind made him a convinced exponent of the voluntary type of Christianity; and his almost unrivalled gifts as a platform-speaker made him a favourite with Free Church audiences. Yet there was nothing sectarian about him. He revealed his own outlook when he said of his fellow-Baptists, "We have learned to be faithful to conscience, without being exclusive; and to insist on loyalty to Christ, without confounding it with loyalty to ourselves." His wide circle of friends, which included such men as Thomas Burt, Lord Bryce, A. M. Fairbairn, Hermann Gollancz, Frederick Harrison, David Lloyd George, Ramsay MacDonald, and W. T. Stead, indicated the catholicity of his mind. But there were other qualities in Clifford which made him so attractive, among them being his extraordinary humility. "I have not known," says one who knew him well, "any public man whose self counted for so little in his own esteem."[1] As we have hinted, young people were drawn to him as a man who was abreast of recent thought, who associated himself with the pioneers of social progress and took such a wide view of the scope of Christianity. There were some, it is true, who regarded Clifford as a political parson, but they did not understand the man. Clifford's religion was Christocentric. He never forgot the advice given him by his mother when he left home to begin his theological training.

[1] J. C. Carlile in *Great Christians* (ed. Forman), p. 140.

"John," she said, "find out the teaching of Jesus; make sure of that, and then stick to it, no matter what may happen." Thereafter, Christ was central in all his thoughts and commanded all his actions. "Christ," he said, "has been to me the centre of intellectual repose, as well as the guide and inspiration of my life, my Saviour and Master, Leader and Companion, Brother and Lord." He was fond of saying, "Our first business is to make men see Christ." All his life he was an exponent of personal evangelism. "He was a true father in God, and not infrequently father-confessor to the most unlikely people: politicians in trouble sought his room; women who had sinned past redemption knelt at his knees."[1] But with his centre so firmly fixed in Christ, Clifford's circumference could be wide. His Christocentric religion was in no danger of degenerating into mere pietism. He had been under the industrial harrow as a child. The iron had entered the soul of the man who began to work at four in the morning before he was twelve years old. He made no secret of his sympathy with the labouring classes and joined the Fabian Society when it was founded. By insisting that Christianity had to do with the whole of life, economic, civic, national and international, he was a pioneer in directing the thoughts of Free Churchmen to the social implications of Christianity.[2] He was among the first to advocate reforms which to-day are supported by all political parties. In his incurable optimism he reflected one of the main characteristics of the nineteenth century. He hailed "every extension of the franchise and every curtailment of class or caste privilege as a step towards the kingdom of God."[3] His courage, too, was unfailing and kept him active to the end in spite of the weight of his years and his failing eyesight. Personally unambitious, once he had determined on the course of action which seemed to him to be right, he stoutly saw it through whatever the consequences. His fidelity to conscience was never impugned. He was unbought and unbuyable —utterly guileless. He joined the unpopular party which pro-

[1] Carlile, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
[2] See the excellent article on Clifford by J. H. Rushbrooke in the D.N.B.
[3] Jeffs, *Princes of the Modern Pulpit*, p. 192.

tested against the Boer War. When the first World War broke out, he proclaimed that it was a fight for freedom and justice, but he did not like conscription and he befriended the conscientious objectors. Speaking at a luncheon on Clifford's eighty-second birthday, Mr. Lloyd George declared: "There is no man in England upon whose conscience I would sooner ring a coin than John Clifford's." A few days later, the veteran issued a manifesto urging Free Churchmen to vote for the Independent Liberals and against Mr. Lloyd George. It is no exaggeration to say that Clifford excelled all other Baptists in the moral and spiritual energy with which he defended their fundamental principle of liberty of conscience. Here is a typical utterance:

> Freedom is the breath of the nation's life, and it is only as freedom is granted that it is possible for us to face our difficulties and master them, to understand our problems and find the solution of them. And of all the liberties we should fight for, there is no liberty so great and so absolutely essential as liberty of conscience.

This will explain why Clifford took the attitude he did during the Down Grade controversy. It was impossible for him to bind himself or any other by a creed.

The Down Grade controversy caused Clifford a great deal of anxiety, as it broke out in the year in which he had been elected to the vice-presidency of the Baptist Union. In 1887, a series of articles appeared in Spurgeon's monthly paper, *The Sword and the Trowel*, complaining that heresy was creeping insidiously into the churches. Later in the same year, Spurgeon withdrew from the Baptist Union on the grounds that it tolerated heresy. In January of 1888, the Council of the Union passed a resolution affirming that Spurgeon should not have made his charges of heresy unless he was prepared to name the offenders. Spurgeon's friends immediately took umbrage, dubbed the resolution "a vote of censure" and demanded its withdrawal.[1] Clifford and others made unsuccessful attempts to keep Spurgeon in the

[1] Even Fullerton (*op. cit.*, p. 312), more than thirty years later, could say that the resolution was "more worthy of a pettifogging lawyer, a peevish woman, or a petulant child, than of a body of high-minded men."

Union. Mistakes were made on both sides. Spurgeon used strong language about the Baptist and other Unions, saying "they begin to look like confederacies of evil." Clifford and his supporters (Alexander Maclaren and Charles Williams) were in a difficult position. They had themselves rejected the doctrine of the inerrancy of the Scriptures and were well aware that one distinguished Baptist minister, Samuel Cox,[1] had made himself one of the best known and ablest exponents of universal restoration. They were also fully alive to the fact that the democratic Assembly of the Union was not the place for the dispassionate debate of theological issues; and they were genuinely anxious to preserve Baptist unity. What, apparently, they did not know was that the secretary of the Union, Samuel Harris Booth, had himself more than once written to Spurgeon complaining of the theological views of certain Baptist ministers.[2] When Spurgeon was asked to substantiate his charges, he naturally felt that the Council was "trimming." He reminded Booth of these letters, but the latter pleaded with him not to divulge them, but to treat them as private and confidential. Thus Spurgeon was placed in a difficult position by his honourable compliance with his friend's request.

It is now clear that the Council of the Union handled the matter in such a way that freedom of thought was preserved, and room was kept for the more progressive, as well as the more conservative, elements in the denomination. With strong and able men on both sides, the clash was one which could not be postponed indefinitely. After more than fifty years, few, if any, Baptists are now other than thankful that the Union took the stand it did and refused Spurgeon's demand that it should accept a definite creed in place of its Declaration of Faith. But for Spurgeon, "the results of the controversy were unspeakably trying. . . . He counted on far larger support than he received;

[1] Dr. Cox (1826–1893) was a Stepney student who ministered for twenty-five years in Nottingham, and was the founder of *The Expositor*. His *Salvator Mundi* was published in 1877. *The Sword and the Trowel* contemptuously referred to the "Larger Hope" as "post-mortem salvation."

[2] See Fullerton, *op. cit.*, p. 315 and Carlile, *C. H. Spurgeon*, pp. 245 ff.

he was humiliated and could not get away from the idea that he had been betrayed."[1] He remained outside the Baptist Union, keeping many of his friends with him, though significantly eighty men who had been trained in his college declined to follow his lead. Many thought that Spurgeon would found another denomination, but his common-sense saved him from such a blunder. His brother, James, continued to serve the Union and was to have been its president in the year of his death. The strong feelings aroused by the controversy have long since been allayed. When the Baptist Union built its present Church House, it placed in the entrance hall a life-size statue of Spurgeon in bronze.

To understand the controversy, we must remember that by the eighteen-eighties the bland religious assumptions of the earlier Victorians were being shaken. There was a great deal of intellectual activity and that of a kind calculated profoundly to disturb and unsettle religious convictions. The idea of evolution was the principal, though not the sole, agent in bringing about the abandonment of the assumptions of the older theology. Biblical criticism was largely the application of the evolutionary hypothesis to the sacred writings. It created a new historical sense—perhaps the most original and distinctive feature of nineteenth century mentality. Spurgeon felt uneasy among the new thoughts stirring in men's minds. To him, the Higher Criticism was an attack upon the inspiration of the Bible, and any attempt to re-state Christian theology was an attempt to eliminate the supernatural element from Christianity. Newman had felt exactly the same misgivings years before and had found an immovable rock in an infallible church. Spurgeon found it in an inerrant Bible about whose interpretation he had no doubts. A sick man, he viewed with deepest concern all departures from the theology of the Puritans whose writings he had so industriously collected.[2] The penal-substitutionary theory of the Atonement alone satisfied him. Nor could he endure the doctrine

[1] Carlile, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

[2] For the extent and present home in America of his fine collection, see Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism*, p. 520.

regarding the future fate of the impenitent advocated by the exponents of the "Larger Hope." More than once he denounced Farrar's *Eternal Hope*. Naturally, many wrote to Spurgeon pleading with him to do something to stem the tide of what they called "Modern Thought." They saw no future for a Christianity which was not pledged to the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, a substitutionary view of the Atonement and the old-fashioned doctrine of future rewards and punishments.

Clifford, on the other hand, belonged to the less conservative strain in the denomination. Spurgeon and he had always been good friends and fellow-workers in the London Baptist Association.[1] Clifford's scientific education in the University of London disposed him to welcome all new knowledge. He was convinced that there was no need for panic over the conflict between religion and science. Nor did he fear the principles of a sane biblical criticism but acquainted his congregation with its assured findings. He stood for freedom as against repression. He did not believe that what the conservatives called "Modern Thought" was undermining the faith once for all delivered to the saints, but made it his business to bring it into captivity to Christ. For him, theology was a progressive science. Spurgeon asked, "Do men really believe that there is a Gospel for each century and a religion for each fifty years?" But Clifford did not confuse the permanent element in Christianity with its theological expression. He realized that the unchanging Gospel must be presented to each century in forms best suited to its understanding and needs, and that to go on presenting it in the old, stereotyped modes of thought and expression was a denial of the truth of the Holy Spirit's abiding presence with Christ's people. Spurgeon's success tended to blind him to the need of theological re-statement; and he was genuinely convinced that nothing could replace the Puritan theology he had imbibed as a youth. Clifford's attitude was that the acceptance of new light and knowledge

[1] When Spurgeon told him that he could not understand why he was not a Calvinist, Clifford replied that he saw Spurgeon only once a month, but read his Bible every day.

was perfectly consistent with loyalty to Christ. Baptists must defend their heritage of liberty and not hedge their ministers with illiberal restrictions. An ardent evangelical, he thus exercised a liberalizing influence upon the denomination.

Alexander Maclaren (1826–1910), the son of a Glasgow business man, was educated at the Stepney College. His first pastorate was at Portland Chapel, Southampton, where he used to say, "during the first five years you could have had a pew all to yourself and another for your hat." In 1858, he went to Union Chapel, Manchester, where he remained till his resignation in 1903. A larger chapel was built on another site to accommodate the congregation drawn by his preaching. In Manchester his life-work was done. He gave himself to his pulpit ministry and became the supreme example of the expository preacher. Sermon-lovers and young ministers made special journeys to Manchester to hear him, hoping to fathom the secret of his pulpit mastery. When he died, *The Times* said: "As a preacher he has reached the whole English-speaking world, and no section of the Christian Church has remained uninfluenced by him. . . . Alexander Maclaren will take his place among the comparatively small company of the great preachers of the world." He disliked committees and preaching on special occasions. "Officialism," he declared, "was the dry rot of the Churches, and was found as rampant amongst democratic Nonconformists as amongst the more hierarchical communities." He loathed statistics, organization, advertising and elaborate music. Nor did he like pastoral work. He lacked many of the qualities which make a man a successful pastor, and there was a streak of shyness in his nature which made it difficult for him to deal with individuals, though in addressing a large gathering, he seemed to deal personally with each person in it. Maclaren never took the subjects of the day into the pulpit, but set himself to expound the Bible. "He had an extraordinary gift of analysing a text. He touched it with a silver hammer, and it immediately broke up into natural and memorable divisions, so comprehensive and so clear that it seemed wonderful that the text should have been handled in any other way." So wrote Robertson

Nicoll when Maclaren died and he added that it was difficult to believe that Maclaren would soon be forgotten or that his expositions of the Bible would be superseded.[1] Yet thirty-five years after his passing his name is hardly ever mentioned and his books are little read, showing that the fame of a man who is a preacher, and nothing more than a preacher, "is almost as evanescent as that of an actor."[2] Baptists honoured Maclaren by electing him twice as president of the Union. Venerable and venerated, he presided at their first World Congress. Robertson Nicoll says, "He might have been anything—soldier, politician, man of letters, man of science, and in any profession he would have taken the head. He was gifted with a swift and clear-cutting intellect," but he chose to be "a minister among the Baptists, faithful to the death, working in the inspiration of the early days to which his heart held firm."[3]

There were many other Baptist leaders whose work merits attention. All the great towns and cities had Baptist ministers who moulded the thought and inspired the philanthropy of their citizens. From them a selection must be made which, to some readers, may appear arbitrary. We may notice first a group of scholarly men, many of whom had been helped by the Dr. John Ward Trust to secure a university education in Scotland, at a time when Dissenters were excluded from full participation in the life and benefits of the ancient English universities. Their record shows that, in spite of all disabilities, there were Baptist homes "fit to be compared with the learned and cultivated country rectories in which the proud Anglican tradition of sound learning was still preserved."[4]

Francis Augustus Cox (1783–1853) was one who proceeded from the Bristol Academy to Edinburgh University. A rich man who had inherited considerable property from his grandfather, he was, for over fifty years, the pastor of the Hackney Church, taking a great interest in the Baptist Missionary Society and writing its

[1] *Princes of the Church*, pp. 249, 254.
[2] Jeffs, *Princes of the Modern Pulpit*, p. 69.
[3] *op. cit.*, pp. 245, 253.
[4] Elliott-Binns, *Religion in the Victorian Era*, p. 73.

history for its jubilee celebrations. He was honorary secretary of the committee which promoted the scheme for a university for London, and of which the Philosophical Radicals were the prime movers. Cox represented those Dissenters who felt keenly their exclusion from Oxford and Cambridge. When, in 1828, University College, London, was founded, and it was decided that no minister of religion should sit on its council, Cox was appointed librarian, but he soon resigned. His intimacy with Lord Brougham secured him the LL.D. degree of Edinburgh University, when Brougham became its Lord Rector. Early in his ministry, Cox had intervened on Robert Hall's side in the controversy over the terms of communion, and had been reminded by Ivimey that he was a young man whose opinions were immature. "His appearance," says Stoughton,[1] "was prepossessing, and though there was a want of naturalness in his manner, his addresses from the pulpit and the platform were often effective, and always well received."

James Acworth (1798–1883) went from the Bristol Academy to Glasgow University as a Ward scholar. A Kentish man, of ancient stock, he was assistant and successor to Thomas Langdon, then ministering in the Old Stone Chapel, Leeds. A far-seeing man, with plenty of energy, he soon moved the church into a new and more spacious home in South Parade. Another indication of the spaciousness of his mind was his removal of the Horton Academy to Rawdon, after he had succeeded Steadman as president. A born organizer, who revelled in committees, he was the only man called to the Chair of the Baptist Union four times. He was once Moderator of the old Yorkshire and Lancashire Association, and seven times Moderator of the Lancashire and Cheshire Association. He published nothing beyond occasional sermons which reveal a style as ornate as Steadman's was plain. He delighted in such high-sounding periphrases as "the associated disciples of Christ statedly worshipping within these walls." His old University gave him its LL.D. degree. After his retirement in 1863, he lived in Scarborough where he became the chairman of

[1] *History of Religion in England*, vol. viii, p. 147.

the local School Board. John Aldis said of him that he "ruled and taught his students." His successor at Rawdon was Samuel Gosnell Green (1821–1905), who was a poor disciplinarian but a better scholar. A man of great refinement and spirituality, Green left Rawdon in 1896 to become editorial secretary of the Religious Tract Society, which published some substantial works of his, long in use among students. It should not be forgotten that Green was a pioneer in advocating new methods of Sunday School work.[1]

Three Baptists were included in the company of revisers when, in the 'seventies, the revision of the Bible was undertaken. Joseph Angus (1816–1902) came from the well-known Northumbrian Baptist family. After a course at the Stepney Academy, he proceeded, as a Ward scholar, to the University of Edinburgh, where he obtained the Gold Medal in Moral Philosophy. After some years as secretary of the Missionary Society, he served the Stepney College as its president for forty-four years, moving it to Regent's Park in 1856 and linking it closely with London University. His scholarship and administrative ability raised the college to a position of great importance in the denomination. His caution was proverbial but he was always ready to strike out on new lines. To assist the sons of Nonconformists, he opened Regent's Park College to lay students, among whom were distinguished public servants like Sir Frederick Lely and Sir Stephen Sale, and scholars like James Sully and W. H. D. Rouse. In his later years, Angus wielded great influence on the London School Board. As early as 1854, he had called attention to inaccuracies in the Authorized Version. This led to his being appointed to the company of New Testament Revisers. Associated with Angus in the work of Regent's Park College was Benjamin Davies (1814–1876), a student of Bristol College, who had studied at Leipzig. Davies was one of the most learned Orientalists of his time and took part in the revision of the Old Testament, as also did Frederick

[1] In her novel, *The Vicar of Langthwaite* (new ed. London, 1897), Lily Watson, S. G. Green's daughter, provided lifelike portraits of Acworth and Green. The former appears as Dr. Yorke, massive in mind and body, the latter as Philip Hawthorne, gentle and scholarly.

William Gotch (1808–1890). After a course at Bristol, Gotch graduated at Dublin which afterwards conferred upon him an honorary LL.D. degree. The real work of his life was done at Bristol, where he served the college as tutor and president for many years. He was a contributor to the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, edited by a former student of Bristol College, Thomas Spencer Baynes (1823–1887), Professor of Logic in the University of St. Andrews.

The fact that three of the sons of John Aldis (1808–1907) were debarred from the Fellowships to which their places in the Tripos Lists entitled them, stimulated the agitation which, in 1871, resulted in the University Tests Act, which opened all lay posts in Oxford and Cambridge to men of all creeds on equal terms. A student of the Horton Academy, Aldis had married Steadman's youngest daughter, who was the kind of woman that revelled in Mansel's Bampton Lectures, *Limits of Religious Thought*. He was pastor of the Maze Pond Church where one of the pews was filled by the family of Whymper, the wood-engraver, and father of the famous Alpinist. From the City of London School, the three sons went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, where all did well, the eldest being Senior Wrangler and First Smith's Prizeman.

During this period a few Anglicans adopted Baptist views, the most notable being the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Wriothesley Noel (1798–1873), the son of Sir Gerard Noel Noel, Baronet, and Lady Noel, Baroness Barham. Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, he took orders and became the minister of the proprietary St. John's Chapel in Bedford Row. His evangelical preaching drew large congregations and he was made one of the Queen's chaplains. He caused a sensation in religious circles when he adopted Baptist views and was publicly baptized in 1849. From 1850 to 1868 he ministered to the Baptist church in John Street, Holborn, and thereafter, till the end of his life, gave himself to evangelistic work. He was twice elected to the Chair of the Baptist Union. A total abstainer, he took a prominent part in the Temperance Movement at a time when it was far from popular. He censured C. H. Spurgeon for introducing dissension among the ranks of the

Evangelicals by his sermon on Baptismal Regeneration. Noel also declined to join the Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control, or to appear on its platform. He wrote against the State-establishment of religion but took the view that disestablishment should be promoted by argument and persuasion and not by political action.

A striking figure among the General Baptists of the New Connexion was Thomas Cooper (1805–1892), who began his working life as an apprentice to a shoemaker in Gainsborough. His craving for knowledge led him to educate himself and to obtain employment as a schoolmaster. Thereafter, he was a journalist in Lincoln, London, and Leicester, where the miseries of the poor stockingers wrung his soul with anguish and drove him into the Chartist Movement, whose *Midland Counties Illuminator* he edited. The Leicester Tories called him "a villain who deserved hanging"; and for two years he was imprisoned on the charge of sedition and conspiracy. On his release he abandoned his sceptical views and gave himself, as a Christian Evidence lecturer, to resolving the difficulties of intelligent and conscientious doubters. His early associations had been with the Methodists, but he became a General Baptist in 1859, and was later one of their ministers, doing much to revive the old church at Lincoln, now called the Thomas Cooper Memorial Church. His glowing eyes revealed the fire that burned within him; and his voice could call ten thousand people to order.

In the New Connexion, the Goadbys, Stevensons, and Pikes provided able and energetic ministers. Jabez Burns (1805–1876) and his son, Dawson Burns (1828–1909), were ardent temperance advocates, the latter being one of the founders of the United Kingdom Alliance. Jabez Tunnicliff (1805–1865), a New Connexion minister in Leeds, founded the first Band of Hope in the country. But it was a Particular Baptist, Joseph Livesey (1794–1884) who first advocated teetotal principles in England. One of "the Seven Men of Preston," Livesey was editor of *The Preston Guardian* and issued several temperance periodicals. He was associated with the Leeming Street Church, Preston, founded by

some working men who migrated from the Prescot Street Church, London, in connexion with the calico trade.

In churches of the Baptist type, the work of the laymen is all-important. Out of a multitude who served the churches in this period, we can mention only a few. General Sir Henry Havelock (1795–1857), married at Serampore a daughter of Joshua Marshman and was there baptized in 1830. Thereafter, he gave himself to the moral and spiritual welfare of his men who were willing to follow him anywhere. The story of how, during the Indian Mutiny, he captured Cawnpore, relieved Lucknow and died soon after of dysentery, has a secure place in British history. His son, Sir Henry Marshman Havelock-Allan, V.C., M.P. (1830–1897), presided at the opening meetings of the Metropolitan Tabernacle and Westbourne Park Chapel. Another distinguished servant of India was Sir Donald Friell MacLeod, C.B., K.C.S.I. (1798–1871), who was baptized by Andrew Leslie, the Baptist missionary at Monghyr. His final appointment in India was that of Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab.

In England, Sir Samuel Morton Peto, Baronet (1809–1889) was known, in the days of his prosperity, for his princely generosity, which touched Baptist life at many points. He was a partner in a famous firm of building contractors which built the Reform Club, the Nelson Monument, the Houses of Parliament, and the Lyceum Theatre. Always a deeply religious man, concerned for the welfare of his many workmen, he became a Baptist after he had married, as his second wife, a daughter of Henry Kelsall of Rochdale, a leading Baptist layman in Lancashire. In 1846, Peto went into railway building and, while he was constructing the Norwich section of the London and North Eastern Railway, met William Brock, the minister of St. Mary's Chapel, Norwich. In 1848, Peto built, at his own expense, Bloomsbury Chapel, London, and persuaded Brock to become its first pastor. "It was the glory of Bloomsbury to possess and effectually work a slum mission before 'slumming' became a fashionable craze. Dr. Brock heard the cry of outcast London, or at least that part of it which sweltered in Seven Dials, the plague area of the centre

of the Metropolis. To the district where vice was most rampant Bloomsbury sent its representative, Mr. G. W. McCree, a man of consecrated common-sense and great boldness in the service of Christ. He was identified with every good work, and was as popular in the 'thieves' kitchen' of the penny lodging-house as upon the platform of a temperance meeting."[1] The flourishing church at Bloomsbury was able to repay Peto the £18,000 he had spent on building its premises. He used the money to purchase the lease of the Diorama at Regent's Park, which he reconditioned as a chapel in which William Landels[2] ministered, drawing an evening congregation of 1,800. Before long, Peto was building railways all over the world. With Thomas Brassey, the greatest entrepreneur of the railway age, he constructed the Balaclava railway which facilitated military operations and relieved the hardships of the soldiers during the Crimean War. As a Member of Parliament, he was responsible for amendments to the Truck Act, took an active part in the debate on the Church Rates Abolition Bill, and secured the passing of the Peto Act which greatly simplified the appointment of trustees for dissenting places of worship. The financial troubles of the years 1866–1867 forced his firm into bankruptcy, with liabilities estimated at several million pounds. He started life afresh and built other railways. Though he had devoted a great deal of his energy and his once ample fortune to the work of Baptist extension, he never again occupied quite the same place among Baptists, owing to their attitude to one who has once been bankrupt, even through circumstances beyond his control. Peto belonged to an era that has now passed away. When in London he used to drive to Bloomsbury Chapel in his omnibus which carried his family in one part, the female servants in another, and the men servants on the box. Alfred Henry Baynes (1838–

[1] Carlile, *The Story of the English Baptists*, p. 255.

[2] Landels could attract a great crowd for a popular lecture at Exeter Hall. He "had a wonderful memory. He could deliver a whole series of orations without notes and without the slightest variation from his manuscript. He composed his public utterances with great attention to oratorical effect. The sentences were decorative and delivered in a torrent of unfaltering and passionate speech. Audiences were held breathless until the peroration was finished" (Carlile, *op. cit.*, p. 256).

1914), who served the Baptist Missionary Society so long and with such distinction as its General Secretary, was originally in Peto's employ. For many years Peto was the generous treasurer of the Society and, at a time when it needed expert financial help, he sent Baynes to give the needed assistance. He remained and established himself as a prince among missionary secretaries.[1] An earlier secretary of the Missionary Society, Edward Bean Underhill (1813–1901), was the second layman to be elected, in 1873, to the Chair of the Baptist Union. He served the Society from 1849 to 1876, and visited many of its fields, always displaying real missionary statesmanship. Almost alone among his contemporaries, he realized the possibilities of the then unused Royal Charter empowering Serampore College to grant degrees. Among the deacons of the Regent's Park Church was Lord Justice Robert Lush (1807–1881), who was treasurer of the Particular Baptist Fund and a generous supporter of the Missionary Society. He married the daughter of Christopher Woollacot, for many years pastor of the Little Wild Street Church, with which Sir Robert was at one time associated.

Thomas Cook (1808–1892), the founder of the well-known firm of tourist agents, was a layman who belonged to the New Connexion of General Baptists, being employed by them for a short time as an evangelist. While working as a wood-turner at Market Harborough, he organized, as the secretary of a Temperance Association, the first publicly advertised excursion by train in England (1841). The success of this excursion (from Leicester to Loughborough and back) induced him to take up the organization of excursions at home and abroad as his regular occupation. In the course of his travels he visited the mission stations of both Societies in India and elsewhere, sending home reports which were published in *The Missionary Observer*. A lifelong advocate of total abstinence, he erected the Temperance Hall in Leicester. To his generosity the New Connexion owed its

[1] Baynes was the brother of Thomas Spencer Baynes mentioned above. Their father, Joseph Baynes (1795–1875), was for forty years the minister of the Church at Wellington, Somerset.

mission in Rome, later taken over by the Baptist Missionary Society.

Something must now be said about those Baptists, mentioned in our last chapter, who declined to be drawn into the main stream of Baptist life as it flowed through the local Associations and the Baptist Union. Till his death in 1844, William Gadsby continued to lead the hyper-Calvinists, heartening them in many parts of England and planting new churches. His followers received two notable recruits from the Church of England in William Tiptaft (1803–1864) and Joseph Charles Philpot (1802–1869). Philpot was the son of the Rector of Ripple in Kent. He obtained a First in Greats at Oxford and was elected a Fellow of Worcester College in 1827. An unhappy love affair, which kept him a bachelor till the lady died, turned his thoughts to religion, and he underwent a conversion so thorough that everyone noticed the change wrought in him. He was appointed Perpetual Curate at Stadhampton where his preaching on evangelical but Calvinistic lines soon filled the church, to the disgust of the squire's wife who always left just before the sermon began. At a clerical meeting, he came into touch with Tiptaft, a Cambridge graduate and Vicar of Sutton Courtenay. In 1831, Tiptaft renounced his Orders and built a chapel in Abingdon in which to preach. The next year he was baptized by Roger Hitchcock, an ex-clergyman, who ministered to a Baptist church in Devizes.[1] Thereafter, till his death from cancer of the throat, Tiptaft spent himself for the Strict and Particular Baptists. Philpot felt constrained to follow his friend but held back till 1835, when, having told his parishioners that they would never see him in the pulpit again, he crossed the village-green to his lodgings, handed his black silk preaching-gown to his landlady and told her to sell it

[1] Philpot, *op. cit.*, p. 341, which corrects the statement on p. 133. Another ex-clergyman who joined the same group was Frederick Tryon (*b.* 1813), a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, who, in 1839, resigned the living of Deeping St. James, and built in the village a Baptist chapel which he called "Cave Adullam," where he ministered for sixty years. (See *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. VI, pp. 367 ff.) For other seceding clergymen, see W. C. Clayton, *Letters by the late Joseph Charles Philpot, M.A.* (London, 1871), pp. 23 ff.

for what it would fetch.[1] He published his reasons for the step he had taken in a letter of resignation to the Provost of his College which went into many editions.[2] The letter shows how completely he had gone over from the Church to the Sect-type of Christianity. It repudiates the idea of baptismal regeneration ("the Word of God allowing no other than the baptism of believers, and that by immersion") and criticizes the whole conception of a State Church. It was obviously written under great strain:

> From this worldly and unholy system (wrote Philpot) I now secede; and blessed be the name of God Most High, who has poured light on my eyes to see these abominations. . . . But my long relationship with yourself . . . and with my brother Fellows, will not allow me thus to dissolve my connexion with you without faithfully warning both you and them of your present state before God.

The same year Philpot was baptized at Allington, Wiltshire, by Warburton, the former Lancashire weaver.[3] He served the Strict and Particular churches for the rest of his life, holding pastorates at Allington, Oakham, and Stamford. For more than twenty years he edited *The Gospel Standard* keeping in his place William Gadsby's volatile son, John.[4] Philpot's sermons were translated into Dutch and German and also circulated in America. His high-Calvinism comes out in his denunciation of John Wesley as "a man who sowed his tares in the Gospel field, and fought with all the desperate enmity of his crafty mind against the sovereignty of God." Yet he could denounce Antinomianism as "the damning sin of the Calvinists, as self-righteousness is that of the Arminians . . . if there be any professor of religion, or professor of high doctrines,

[1] At that time it was the custom for Anglican clergy to change from the surplice into a black Geneva gown before the sermon.

[2] Printed in Philpot, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 276 ff.

[3] A few months later, Philpot's friend, Francis W. Newman, brother of the Cardinal and Fellow of Balliol, was baptized at Broadmead Chapel, Bristol. He acted for a brief period as classical tutor at the Bristol Academy and later became a Unitarian.

[4] Philpot, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 46 ff. gives a long account of John Gadsby who apparently combined ability to speak the language of Zion (or Zoar) with considerable business acumen.

who lives in sin, that man is no child of God; he is a child of the devil, a double-dyed, treble-distilled hypocrite." His preaching was what in those days was called "experimental" and made many converts.

Utterly devoid of class-feeling, Philpot worked cordially with the humble men who were his fellow-ministers. "The call to the ministry," he said, "is as sovereign as the call by grace." He had, however, two aristocratic friends who shared his views. Lady Lucy Smith (1794–1865) was the daughter of a Scottish peer and granddaughter of John Thornton, the enormously wealthy and philanthropic London merchant. She married Henry Smith, the Nottingham banker, who shared her serious views. Very handsome and a woman of spirit, she said to her daughter-in-law a few days before her death, "Some trust in chariots, some in horses, some in doctors, some in ministers; but we will trust in the Lord." The Abel Smith, who married into the Royal Family a few years ago, was her great-grandson.[1] Grey Hazlerigg (1818–1912), a son of the eleventh baronet, and for many years minister in Leicester, had been educated at Eton, kissed the hand of William IV and carried the colours of his regiment at Manchester when Queen Victoria was crowned. Every one in Leicester recognized the old man when his man-servant took him for an airing in a bath-chair; and even General Baptists spoke of him with respect. His own flock were devoted to him and when he died, one of them described him as "a perfect gentleman both by birth and by grace, a prince among preachers . . . a clear exponent of experimental truth, but unflinchingly severe against all inventions of error." Evidently Hazlerigg had grown since 1861 when Philpot wrote of him, "He has never been much rolled in Job's ditch, nor been in the furnace of affliction, or passed through deep trials and cutting temptations. The want of this experience makes him to the exercised family of God but a dry breast."[2] But Strict and Particular ministers had a habit of being critical of one another.

[1] Philpot, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 128.
[2] Quoted by Philpot, *op. cit.*, Vol .II, p. 137.

Philpot did not escape criticism in the highly contentious body to which he belonged, whose members have been described as "hungry souls but fastidious feeders." About 1860, a sermon by him on the Eternal Generation of the Son provoked a good deal of controversy, especially in their London circles, where one of their leaders, the high-Calvinist, Charles Waters Banks (1806–1886), had started in 1845 yet another two-penny monthly, *The Earthen Vessel*.[1] The question was the same as that which had agitated the McLeanist Baptists in Scotland: Is Christ the Son of God by nature or by office? With his excellent education and knowledge of patristics, Philpot answered "by nature"; and as editor of *The Gospel Standard* would allow only the orthodox view to be presented in that paper. He wrote strongly on the subject, realizing how much was at stake. Banks, on the other hand, was willing to publish articles and letters from both sides. The orthodox were offended when they found the Eternal Generation of the Son described in *The Earthen Vessel* as "a figment" and "a piece of twaddle"; and, for the short time that the controversy lasted, it sharply divided the supporters of the two periodicals. The net result was that the supporters of *The Gospel Standard* have ever since declined to have any relations with other high-Calvinists. At its suggestion, they agreed to subscription to a creed, "which is the quintessence of hyper-Calvinism and of exclusiveness."[2] They called their churches "the Living Family," implying, says a writer in 1870, that "all other churches are the Dead Family—the Congregation of the Dead." In 1872, *The Gospel Standard* declared: "We rejoice to know that the real Old School Baptists in America discard general invitations as much as we do, and will not join with any who do not." It is still an offence which calls for discipline for their members to participate in a Communion service at which persons not baptized as believers take part. The churches of this group are linked together by *The Gospel Standard* and by very little else, thus adhering to the teaching of Gadsby

[1] In 1849, it claimed a circulation of five thousand and that it was read "by double that number, and by a class of persons who seldom see any other publication."

[2] Whitley, H.B.B., p. 306.

who always questioned the value of churches associating together. In recent years, however, some attempt has been made to get them to consider themselves a denomination. They have about three hundred churches in the kingdom, of which about twenty-five are in the London area. They still support the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society, which has homes at Hornsey Rise and Camberwell.

Another London leader of this party was James Wells (1803–1872), who ministered to a great congregation in the Surrey Tabernacle, Walworth. In earlier life he had been the driver of a carrier's waggon, but he learned to speak good English and had some knowledge of Hebrew and Greek. Three thousand persons crowded into the Surrey Tabernacle for his funeral service, "and nearly every one of them wept for the loss of a personal friend." James Wells' criticism of Spurgeon has already been mentioned. The outstanding leader during the later Victorian period was J. K. Popham, who ministered to a church at Brighton until he was over ninety.

Other Strict and Particular Baptists did not hesitate to organize themselves into Associations. They are the modern representatives of the close-communion group among the older Particular Baptists, whose traditions of Association-life they were much more anxious to keep than the Gospel Standard churches. In our last chapter we noticed the foundation, in 1829, of the Suffolk and Norfolk New Association to safeguard Calvinistic doctrine and the practice of close-communion. This Association is to-day in fellowship with the Metropolitan Association of Strict Baptist Churches, founded in 1871 by a number of churches which felt that they could not enter the London Baptist Association (1865), and also with the Cambridgeshire and East Midlands Union (Strict), founded in 1927. In these three Associations there are 103 churches with a total membership of about 6,000; and there are many churches in other counties which are not linked up by any Association.[1] Their theological position may be gathered

[1] In the North there is a Union for the Strict Baptist churches of Lancashire and Yorkshire. There is no national union of these Strict and Particular churches, but in 1944 it was reported that their Metropolitan Association was exploring the possibilities of such a Union.

from the Doctrinal Basis of their Metropolitan Association, which provides their ablest leaders. To Calvinism and close-communion it adds the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Old and New Testaments, "the congregational order of the Churches," and "the duty of preaching the Gospel to every creature of the fallen race of Adam." Saving faith is described "not as a legal duty, but the sovereign and gracious gift of God." The Eternal Generation of the Son is safeguarded by the phrase "ever subsisting in Essential Deity." As their vigorous Sunday School work and their foreign missionary society show, they have advanced as far as Fullerism, but not beyond it. In their early days, they withdrew their support from the Baptist Missionary Society on theological grounds but, in 1861, they founded the Strict Baptist Mission, choosing the Madras Presidency as their field. Presumably they maintain that Calvinists must offer the Gospel to all on the principle that preaching elicits who are the elect, as a magnet plunged into a mixture of sawdust and iron filings separates them and draws out the latter. Their periodical is *The Gospel Herald* in which *The Earthen Vessel* has been merged. Their worship is simple, often without musical accompaniment; and their pastors are often laymen. They share in the Particular Baptist Fund and possess funds of their own for pastoral aid, superannuation, and the relief of widows of ministers. They also display a certain aloofness from public affairs and manifest little concern in the social and international implications of Christianity, but their outlook is widening. In 1944 they reported that one of their pastors was serving as a chaplain with a Parachute Regiment.

CHAPTER IX

Larger Horizons and New Problems

THE dawn of the twentieth century found Baptists sharing fully in that spirit of eager confidence which then marked Nonconformity.[1] In 1898, the Council of the Baptist Union had called John Howard Shakespeare (1857–1928) to the secretaryship of the Union. In his youth Shakespeare had come under the influence of James Thew, the quiet and cultured preacher who drew such large congregations in the Belvoir Street Chapel, Leicester. A student at Regent's Park College and a graduate of the University of London, Shakespeare's first and only pastoral charge was at St. Mary's Chapel, Norwich, where he showed his gifts as a preacher and platform speaker. His first task as secretary of the Union was to raise the Twentieth Century Fund. In 1898, the president, Samuel Vincent of Plymouth, had suggested that Baptists should greet the new century by raising a large fund for a great advance. Under Shakespeare's guidance the proposal was adopted and worked out in detail. The target was set at £250,000, of which half was to be used for evangelization at home and church extension in districts where religious need was not met by other evangelical churches. £34,000 was to be set aside for a Baptist Church House, and £30,000 for the assistance of weaker churches which could not otherwise support pastors. Other specific objects were included, such as help for the Annuity Fund. By the Spring of 1902, Shakespeare was able to report that the money had been raised. In 1903, the Church House was opened at a cost of little under £50,000, and provision was made for the

[1] cf. Payne, *The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England*, p. 123.

old Eagle Street Church, which had been demolished owing to the widening of Southampton Row, and whose public spirit had facilitated the purchase of the site. For the first time the Baptist Union had offices and a council chamber of its own. Baptists had discovered the value of corporate action and something of their own strength. Thus Shakespeare proved that "he was the man for the time, and brought to the scattered ranks of the Baptists a generalship that turned a crowd into an army."[1] With absolute sincerity Shakespeare, who was not enamoured of the old Independency, went on tightening up the organization. The next great task to which he set himself was to raise another £250,000 for a Sustentation Fund for augmenting the stipends of the worst paid ministers, some of whom were on the fringe of poverty. This was successfully completed in 1914.

With the Sustentation Fund Shakespeare coupled a far-reaching scheme for the re-organization of the Baptist ministry, insisting that financial support of the ministry by the Baptist Union carried with it responsibility for its efficiency. Only ministers recognized by the Union were allowed to participate in the benefits of the Sustentation Fund. This led to lists of Accredited Ministers being drawn up and to the adoption of a scheme to make sure that after leaving college they continued their studies. England and Wales were divided into ten districts, each in charge of a General Superintendent whose business it was to watch the interests of the denomination throughout his area. "The name must not be taken to imply more than moral and persuasive authority. It would quite misrepresent their position and work to regard them as 'bishops'; but they are more than travelling secretaries. They are encouragers and advisers, and are at the service of the Churches and ministers for all spiritual purposes."[2] No spiritual function has been assigned to them which cannot be carried out by any Baptist minister or layman, who has been requested to perform it by the church concerned. In the case of aided churches, it is their business to see that the regulations

[1] J. C. Carlile, *My Life's Little Day*, p. 152.
[2] H. Wheeler Robinson, *Life and Faith of the Baptists*, p. 109.

laid down by the Union are observed; in other churches they act in an advisory capacity only. For the first time arrangements were made under the Ministerial Settlement and Sustentation Scheme for the removal and settlement of ministers. Shakespeare did not carry through his scheme without opposition. "The old guard of the denomination were afraid. Could they have read all that was in Shakespeare's mind they would have been more afraid. The scheme went through and for the first time in their history the Baptists became an ecclesiastical body."[1] Twenty-four churches associated with the Union refused to come into the scheme,[2] but it now includes everything influential in the denomination.

In the meantime, Shakespeare had done another fine piece of work in making the arrangements for the first Baptist World Congress to meet in London in 1905, one hundred and fifteen years after John Rippon had mooted the idea in the dedication of his *Baptist Register*. Several American Baptists had suggested a Pan-Baptist Congress, but it was the driving force of Dr. J. N. Prestridge of Louisville, Kentucky, and the organizing powers of Shakespeare which brought matters to a successful issue. The Congress of 1905 revealed the extraordinary spread of Baptists throughout the world during the nineteenth century. Twenty-three countries responded to the roll-call. Most of the countries of Europe were represented. Alexander Maclaren, as we have already noted, acted as president. The most important outcome of the Congress was the foundation of the Baptist World Alliance on a voluntary and fraternal basis. "It is," says Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke, "the instrument of all Baptists throughout the world for three great purposes; (1) to express and promote unity and fellowship among them; (2) to secure and defend religious freedom; (3) to proclaim the great principles of our common faith."[3] Shakespeare was appointed as Eastern secretary and John Clifford

[1] Carlile, *op. cit.*, p. 162.
[2] See Shakespeare, *The Churches at the Cross-roads*, p. 155.
[3] *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. IX, p. 69. This article gives an excellent account of the foundation, aims and activities of the World Alliance, of which Dr. Rushbrooke is the present president.

as president. Subsequent World Congresses have been held in Philadelphia (1911), Stockholm (1923), Toronto (1928), Berlin (1934), and Atlanta (1939). Regional Conferences have been held in different parts of the world. The Alliance has done a great deal for the defence of religious liberty, especially in Rumania. Largely through the generosity of American Baptists, it was able to spend a million dollars on relief work in Europe after the first World War. "No strict denominational frontier was drawn, and the fund became a practical expression of human brotherhood," says Dr. Rushbrooke who served as Baptist Commissioner for Europe in administering the fund. When the second World War broke out, Baptists in the United States, Canada and other Dominions sent substantial gifts to help the Missionary Society and those churches in Britain which had suffered from enemy action. The effect of the World Alliance on British Baptists has been to widen their horizons and to make them see that they are but a small part of the Baptist world-family. It has also become clear that Baptists now form the largest Free Church denomination in the world. Their growth has been remarkable in the United States, where all churches are voluntary societies in the eyes of the civil law, and Baptists are not hampered, as in England, by the persistent tendency for religious affiliations to be determined by social status. In Russia, too, their growth has been phenomenal. As this book is being written comes the news that the two great bodies in which they are organized (the Baptists and the Evangelical Christians) have been fused. Their combined membership cannot be less than two millions.

During the first World War, Shakespeare did yeoman service in securing provision for the spiritual needs of Baptists and others serving with the Forces. The War Office provided chaplains only for Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, and Jews. With the assistance of Mr. David Lloyd George, Shakespeare secured from Lord Kitchener the establishment of the United Army Board, on which Baptists, Congregationalists, Primitive Methodists, and United Methodists co-operated with the War Office in nominating chaplains. He was its first chairman

and joint-secretary. Before the war ended, two hundred and seventy-eight United Board chaplains were serving in all parts of the world, and hundreds of ministers were functioning as "Officiating Clergymen." Shakespeare also took a deep interest in what is often called "Women's Work" and established a college for training women as deaconesses. After the war, a third appeal for £250,000 was successfully promoted. The increased cost of living had left many ministers in difficult circumstances, and the Missionary Society was in need of funds. The new fund, known as the Baptist United Fund, was raised in 1920–1921, and was divided equally between the Union and the Society.

In his early years as secretary of the Union, Shakespeare was an ardent denominationalist, though no lover of the old Independency. "For years," says one of his friends, "he was wise enough to play the part of the democrat, but fuller acquaintance with the Free Churches led him to the belief that their organization was too individualist."[1] In his later years he advocated a union of all the Free Churches, visualising a United Free Church of England as the counterpart of the State Church.[2] Thereafter he became one of the leading advocates of the union of all the Churches. His views are set out with passionate intensity in his *The Churches at the Cross-roads* (1918), which reveals that he was disturbed by the decline in religion which had set in before the first World War and was accelerated by it. He quoted[3] figures to show that all the Free Churches had lost a considerable number of members and Sunday School scholars between 1906 and 1916. He deplored the wastefulness of having several Free Churches in a single village or small town, and maintained that denominationalism was already a thing of the past. He looked forward to reunion with the Church of England and asserted his readiness to accept episcopacy and re-ordination. The following quotations will sufficiently reveal his mind.

[1] Carlile, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[2] For Shakespeare's part in the foundation in 1919 of the Federal Council of Evangelical Free Churches, see Payne, *op. cit.*, 130 ff., 154.

[3] *op. cit.*, p. 73. During this period the membership of the Baptist churches in the United Kingdom had declined by 26,712.

The days of denominationalism are numbered. There is nothing more pathetic or useless, in this world, than clinging to dead issues, worn-out methods, and antiquated programmes.

The Free Churches have reached a stage in the religious life of this country when, if they are simply a denomination and not a united Church, they are doomed.

They cannot reach the people or move them in their disunited state. If they would come together and bend their vast resources in unity to the one end, they would usher in a day of national religious awakening such as no living man has ever seen.

It is no use concealing my conviction that reunion will never come to pass except upon the basis of episcopacy.[1]

Such outspokenness produced something like consternation in Baptist circles. "Upon more than one occasion the Secretary of the Baptist Union came into sharp conflict with his brethren who could not understand his change of opinion. The fact is Shakespeare did not change his opinion; he had never believed in some positions assumed by the denomination to which he belonged, and he regarded all questions of organization as secondary."[2] Among those disturbed by Shakespeare's advocacy of reunion was the veteran John Clifford. He longed for the realization among all Christians of their essential unity in Christ, but he did not believe in uniformity. In his view there was more sentiment than hard thinking behind the frequent exclamation, "What a nice thing it would be to have only one Church, with one doctrine, one ministry and one discipline!" Harmony he desired, for there was nothing sectarian in his make-up; but he held that harmony was compatible with variety. He felt that the advocates of reunion had little patience with the Sect-type of Christianity and that they were really advocates of uniformity, believing that without homogeneity there could be no real unity in the Church of Christ. For Clifford, unity and differentiation were not inconsistent ideas; and uniformity was, for him, both intolerable and deadening.[3]

[1] *op. cit.*, pp. 82, 102, 165, 178. [2] Carlile, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

[3] See, for example, Marchant, *op. cit.*, pp. 261 ff., 273 ff., and 262 for the rejection by Baptists in the North of England of the Reunion Proposals of 1922.

Shakespeare was deeply disappointed with the chilly reception given to his proposals for reunion. "An autocrat to his finger-tips; a leader who knew his own mind and followed his own way,"[1] he had hitherto succeeded in carrying his proposals in spite of opposition. He now felt lonely—all the more so because, dictator though he was, there was a feminine streak in his nature which made him crave for the support of others. His last years were clouded by a nervous breakdown, which compelled him to retire from the secretaryship of the Union in 1924. When he died he left instructions that no biography should be published. It requires no great psychological insight to see that his nervous breakdown was due, not simply to over-work, but also to the conflict set up in his mind between his official position as secretary of the Baptist Union, pledged to advance the interests of a denomination, and his conscientious conviction that the days of denominationalism were ended. For years he had thought it politic to conceal his real aims from his fellow-Baptists, hoping that in time he would be able to carry them with him. In his later years he tried to end the tension by coming out into the open as an advocate of reunion. If he could have secured the support of the denomination, his conflict would have been solved. When it refused to follow him, he felt that his work was done and a breakdown followed.[2] Baptists will always remember with gratitude the work of one who may be said to have given the denomination its present form. Shakespeare was a clear-minded, resourceful administrator of unusual ability. Dr. T. R. Glover, who was a staunch opponent of his reunion schemes, said of him that he "taught all Baptists to form large ideals for their church, to conceive of it as a great society, where differences of tradition should not outweigh the fact of a common faith, and where women should have their function as well as men; to realize it in its world-wide range and significance; and to live more consciously as members one of another."

As we have already noted, Shakespeare's mind was deeply

[1] Carlile, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
[2] See J. C. Carlile, *op. cit.*, pp. 167 ff. for Shakespeare's failure of nerve.

affected by the decline of organized religion in England. He became secretary of the Union at a time when the pendulum of interest was beginning to swing from religion to politics, and the antagonism between Capital and Labour was beginning to take shape. The worker was beginning to feel that he could no longer comfortably worship in the same chapel as his employer. Many joined the crusade for social, rather than personal, salvation. New evangelists appeared in the drab industrial towns to compete with the Christian preacher and to offer "a religion which gives a chance to all." "The chapels," says an independent observer, "kept up their congregations better than the Church of England; but the labour and socialistic movement poached extensively on their preserves."[1] Shakespeare was not blind to what was happening, and reinforced his appeal for reunion with an eloquent plea for the Churches to take their part in solving the ills of society. "The very spirit of individualism," he wrote, "which has been the mainspring of our enormous growth in wealth and commercial power has pressed hardly on the poor." "The new time will require the Church to take its place more definitely in the application of Christ's teaching to secular society, without pretence or evasion."[2] Like Clifford, Shakespeare realized that one of the temptations of the voluntary or Sect-type of Christianity was to fall into the Pietism which holds that the conditions under which a man lives have nothing to do with his soul.

Some of the outstanding figures in Baptist life during Shakespeare's tenure of office have already been mentioned. There were many others.[3] Frederick Brotherton Meyer (1847–1929) appears to have been the only one, among the ministers, of whom the *Dictionary of National Biography* gives an account.[4] In some

[1] Ensor, *England*, 1870–1914, p. 528. In Bradford in 1893 was held a conference of labour and socialistic organizations to co-ordinate local and sporadic efforts in a national organization. Lord Snowden spoke of it as "the most important political event of the nineteenth century." It was no accident that thereafter the Baptist churches of Bradford lost scores of members and adherents.

[2] *op. cit.*, pp. 32, 34.

[3] For accounts of them see Carlile, *The Story of the English Baptists*, pp. 289 ff., 306 ff.

[4] See also Carlile, *op. cit.*, pp. 280 ff.; Jeffs, *Princes of the Modern Pulpit*, pp. 109 ff.; and Fullerton, *Life of F. B. Meyer*, to all of which I am indebted.

ways Meyer was not a typical Baptist minister or a typical product of Regent's Park College. He first served in Liverpool as C. M. Birrell's assistant, trying, as he put it, to wear other men's armour and to fight with their weapons. His next charge was at York, where he came into contact with the famous evangelist, D. L. Moody, who taught him the art of winning souls and influenced him for life. Meyer was next called to the pastorate of the Victoria Road Church, Leicester, where he soon felt uncomfortable. Its well-to-do congregation was not accustomed to a minister who was "an amalgam of Birrell and Moody." Meyer resigned his charge and held services in the Public Museum till Melbourne Hall was built for him. Here he found himself and exercised a great spiritual influence upon the town, which specially admired his unconventional Prison-Gate Mission. Meyer met the prisoners as they were discharged, took them to breakfast, found them employment, and put new hope into their hearts. About this time he came under the influence of "the Cambridge Seven," who brought him face to face with the idea of absolute surrender to the will of God. After 1892, the remainder of his active ministry was spent in London, at Regent's Park Chapel and the undenominational Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, both of which he served twice. The range of his interests broadened. He threw himself into philanthropic and social work; and once created a national sensation by stopping the proposed fight between Bombardier Billy Wells and the negro Jack Johnson. "Meddling, Maudlin Meyer" one newspaper called him. Actually, he had mobilized public opinion on two grounds—the brutality of heavy-weight contests and the risk of arousing racial antagonism. Meyer was later influenced by the Keswick Movement with its teaching that sin is "no necessary condition of the Christian even in this life." This made him a favourite speaker at the Keswick and Northfield Conventions, and a prolific writer of devotional books, pamphlets, and sermons. In some respects this narrowed the range of his influence, for "this quietist religion has its special language, its characteristic phraseology." But it made him well-known all over the world among those "who were seeking,

primarily, not the intellectual basis of faith, not light on the ethical duty of men and societies, but guidance in their quiet meditations on personal holiness and the working of the Spirit in the life of the redeemed individual."[1] Meyer had an alarming habit of speaking with great frankness about his own temptations, which sometimes embarrassed his audiences. They never knew when he would "suddenly draw aside the veil of reticence, and embark on one of these embarrassing confessions," which contrasted so strangely with the austere lines of his refined, ascetic face. The first World War led him into the Advent Testimony Movement. He was president of the Baptist Union and the National Free Church Council, and also gave devoted service to the Brotherhood and Christian Endeavour Movements. His career reveals some remarkable changes of opinion and a certain dispersion of energy, but "he was a most striking exemplification of his own central doctrine: that an ordinary human life, surrendered up as a channel for the energies of the Spirit of God, is capable of almost superhuman achievements."[2]

Very different from Meyer was Thomas Vincent Tymms (1842–1921), who had a lifelong interest in helping others to overcome the intellectual hindrances to faith. A born leader of men, he exercised a remarkable ministry at the Downs Chapel, Clapton, for twenty-two years. His apologetic preaching drew young men like a magnet and secured some fine recruits for service with the Missionary Society. His *Mystery of God* (1885) made a great impression on that generation and secured for him the honorary D.D. of a Scottish University. From 1891 to 1904, Tymms was principal of Rawdon College, where his contempt for examinations led him to reverse the policy of his predecessor, sometimes with results very different from those he anticipated. He was not interested in the minutiae of scholarship, but was a powerful, independent thinker, with a real gift of style. His Angus Lectures, *The Christian Idea of Atonement* (1904), provoked a bitter attack from Professor James Denney, but Professor G. B. Stevens spoke of them with warm approval as "the most elaborate recent presen-

[1] Jeffs, *op. cit.*, p. 116. [2] *ibid.*, p. 124.

tation of the moral theory."[1] Tymms also wrote a few hymns which reveal his cultured and devout spirit, as well as real poetic gifts.

Among the host of Baptist lay preachers, the most distinguished was Terrot Reaveley Glover (1869–1943), whose many books carried his name into learned circles throughout the world. His *Jesus of History*, intended for the average reader, was a best-seller, being translated into several languages, European and Asiatic. A Fellow of St. John's College, Glover was known in Cambridge for the wit of his Latin speeches as Public Orator, the digressions in his lectures on Ancient History, and the pungency of his comments on men, women, and affairs. He was an uncompromising Free Churchman, with a hatred of anything savouring of ecclesiasticism. He had none of the suavity of manner of his father (Dr. Richard Glover, minister of Tyndale Baptist Church, Bristol), but he shared his father's enthusiasm for foreign missions. Everything he did and wrote had a touch of his marked individuality; but he illuminated everything he touched, often using his Canadian experiences to throw new light on the Ancient World. Those who knew him best were aware of the depth of his evangelical experience of the forgiveness of sins. This made his religion Christocentric, and secured him a welcome in the pulpits of all Evangelical Churches.[2]

Many other Baptist laymen deserve notice, but we must content ourselves with mentioning only a few. Herbert Marnham (1864–1935) was a London stockbroker who was treasurer of the Union from 1900 to 1935, of the World Alliance for thirty years, and of many other organizations. He also found time to serve many other philanthropic and educational causes, and to do much public

[1] See his *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation*, p. 238.

[2] I may, perhaps, be pardoned if I add a personal touch in a footnote. I called on Glover a few days before he died. He was lying in his library, weak but still pungent in his comments. He elicited from me that I was to preach that day on the text, "The Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me." He showed me where to find his copy of *Luther on Galatians* and made me read the Reformer's comment, "Stress those pronouns." On another occasion, he remarked that the only memorial he would like would be a small tablet with the words, "*T.R.G. etiam cucurrit.*"

work as a citizen of Hampstead. But his heart was in his church (Heath Street, Hampstead) and its Sunday School, whose work he superintended for thirty-five years. Always a liberal giver, he used to say, "Money is the easiest thing of all to give." A man of incurable modesty, he declined the usual honours that go with such service as he rendered. His unfailing kindness and charity of judgment made him an attractive figure. Another London Baptist, who was passionately devoted to Sunday School work, was Sir Nathaniel Barnaby (1829–1915). A native of Chatham, he rose to be Director of Naval Construction. Associated with High Road Chapel, Lee, he was the author of several hymns for children which are still in use.

Another distinguished London Baptist was Sir Alfred Pearce Gould, K.C.V.O. (1852–1922). A son of George Gould of Norwich, he was a distinguished surgeon, Vice-Chancellor of London University, treasurer of the Missionary Society, and for many years a deacon of Regent's Park Chapel. He married the youngest daughter of Lord Justice Lush. Their son, Surgeon Rear-Admiral Eric Lush Pearce Gould, who died in 1940 at the early age of fifty-four, followed his father as a surgeon on the honorary staff of the Middlesex Hospital. Both were known for their kindness to the needy, and the son as an effective speaker in the cause of temperance. Sir Alfred's brother-in-law, Sir Charles Montague Lush (1853–1930), after building up a large practice in common-law, was made a judge of the King's Bench Division. An eloquent advocate, he is said to have been a hesitant but kindly criminal judge. Sir Clement Meacher Bailhache (1856–1924), the son of the Rev. Clement Bailhache, was promoted by Lord Haldane, as Lord Chancellor, to the Bench "with the entire approval of the Bar." He often presided in the Commercial Court where he was known for his swift businesslike methods. Unconventional, greatly disliking pomp of any kind, a strict teetotaler but a heavy smoker, he was known, says the *Dictionary of National Biography*, to smoke his pipe even on occasions of ceremony, such as the assize-dinner at Bishopthorpe and the Mansion House banquet to the judges. He was a member of the North Finchley Church. William Willis,

K.C. (*d.* 1911), president of the Union in 1905, was a county court judge, known for his tendency to interrupt the advocates who appeared before him. A simple-hearted Christian of the Puritan type, his acts of private generosity were as many as his knowledge of the poets, especially Milton, was wide.

In the North, Sir John Barran, Bart. (*d.* 1905) was appreciated for his steady support of Baptist church life and his liberality. The son of a London gun-maker, he came to Leeds and made a fortune in the clothing trade, when machine-methods were first being applied to the production of clothing for boys. For a time he sat as Liberal Member of Parliament for his adopted city. Keenly interested in education, he was the first treasurer of the University of Leeds, which recognized his generosity by conferring upon him the honorary LL.D. degree. He was also treasurer of Rawdon College and one of the treasurers of the Twentieth Century Fund. In Lancashire, Sir George Watson Macalpine (*d.* 1920), a coal-owner of Accrington, gave a great deal of his time and strength to the affairs of the Missionary Society, visiting their stations in India. His Scottish blood explains, perhaps, his devotion to books, and how it came about that he edited the lectures on Horace delivered by William Medley (*d.* 1908) to his students at Rawdon College.

In the Eastern counties, Sir George White (*d.* 1912) was a notable figure. He worked his way up the industrial ladder to an important position as a shoe-manufacturer and civic leader in the city of Norwich. He was specially interested in Sunday School work and the Baptist Colonial Society. In Parliament he came to be regarded as a representative of Nonconformist views and interests.

In the West of England, Edward Robinson (*d.* 1935) was the head of an old-fashioned family business in Bristol with branches in South Africa, Canada, and the United States. He was treasurer of the Missionary Society from 1904 to 1914, and of the Bristol Baptist College for many years. He married a daughter of Dr. Gotch. His generosity was boundless; in him there was no trace of the hard-faced business man. As early as 1889, he granted a

week's holiday with pay to all who had been in the employ of his firm for twelve months. He was also one of the first to introduce into his business a pension fund and a profit-sharing scheme. His benefactions to Bristol included a gift (to celebrate his golden wedding) which enabled the Corporation to clear a slum area, convert it into a permanent open-space, and make provision towards the cost of re-housing those dispossessed. Obituary notices often lend themselves to fulsome flattery, but Dr. Charles Brown did not exaggerate when he said of Edward Robinson, "He was one of God's gentlemen, and a man of transparent sincerity, without pretence or guile, of stainless honour, unblemished integrity and unaffected piety."

In 1925, Shakespeare was succeeded as secretary of the Baptist Union by the Rev. Melbourn Evans Aubrey, whose first great task was to raise £300,000 for a Ministerial Superannuation Fund. With his coming into office, the historian catches up with his contemporaries and his task virtually comes to an end. He must, however, say something about the reaction of Baptists to Shakespeare's reunion proposals and also indicate the major questions now being canvassed in the denomination.

At the Assembly of 1926, it was made clear that Shakespeare "had gone ahead of the rank and file and had caused widespread suspicion because of his often expressed hope that the Free Churches and the Anglican Church might ultimately be brought together, for the sake of which he was himself ready to accept a modified episcopacy and even some form of reordination."[1] The president, Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke, spoke of the "Appeal to all Christian People," issued by the Lambeth Conference of 1920, as "a notable and noble historic document," but he declared that it was impossible for Baptists to accept reordination or the view that the oneness of Christ's Church was "dependent on the existence and powers of an order of Church officers." The Assembly also adopted a reply to the Lambeth Appeal from which we cite the following:

We believe in the Catholic Church as the holy Society of believers in our

[1] Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

Lord Jesus Christ, which He founded, of which He is the only Head, and in which He dwells by His Spirit, so that though made up of many communions, organized in various modes, and scattered throughout the world, it is yet one in Him.

We believe that this holy Society is truly to be found wherever companies of believers unite as Churches on the ground of a confession of personal faith. Every local community thus constituted is regarded by us as both enabled and responsible for self-government through His indwelling Spirit Who supplies wisdom, love and power, and Who, as we believe, leads these communities to associate freely in wider organizations for fellowship and the propagation of the Gospel.

We reverence and obey the Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, as the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Scriptures, and we hold that each Church has liberty to interpret and administer His laws . . . we believe that this principle of the freedom of the individual Church under Christ has the sanction of Scripture and the justification of history, and therefore we cannot abandon it without being false to our trust. Moreover, it is plain to us that the headship and sole authority of our Lord in His Church excludes any relations with the State as may impair its liberty. This view of the Church determines our attitude towards the special issues raised by the Lambeth Appeal. . . .

In our judgment the baptism of infants subverts the conception of the Church as the fellowship of believers. . . .

In general, the place given to the Sacraments by the Lambeth Appeal would, it appears, exclude from the universal Church of our Lord, bodies of devoted Christians with whom we enjoy fellowship, and to this exclusion we cannot assent.

Our doctrine of the Church determines our conception of the ministry. We hold firmly the priesthood of all believers, and therefore have no separated order of priests. The ministry is for us a gift of the Spirit to the Church, and is an office involving both the inward call of God and the commission of the Church. We can discover no ground for believing that such a commission can be given only through an episcopate, and we hold that the individual Church is competent to confer it. For us there is no more exalted office than a ministry charged with preaching the Word of God and with the care of souls. Yet any full description of the ministerial functions exercised among us must also take account of other believers who, at the call of the church, may preside at the observance of the Lord's Supper or fulfil any other duties which the Church assigns to them. . . .

It will be gathered from this reply that union of such a kind as the Bishops have contemplated is not possible for us. . . . Further progress in the direction of Christian unity can be secured, we are convinced, only by unreserved

mutual recognition . . . We believe that the time has come when the Churches of Christ should unite their forces to meet the need of the world. We therefore are prepared to join the Church of England in exploring the possibility of a federation of equal and autonomous Churches in which the several parts of the Church of Christ would co-operate in bringing before men the will and claims of our Lord.

The Baptist reply to the Lambeth Appeal still represents the convictions of the overwhelming majority of Baptists, not only in England but throughout the world. They belong, as their predecessors have belonged, to a type of Christianity which does not believe the question "What think ye of the Church?" is the same question, differently formulated, as "What think ye of Christ?"[1] They do not believe that Our Lord laid down any specific organization for the Church He founded, but they are convinced that their own democratic, or Christocratic, organization brings them nearer to the heart of the New Testament than any other. In their view the best scholarship does not give its support to the Anglican assumption that there is only one legitimate form of church polity. For them, spiritual unity is more valuable than corporate union. Corporate union might mean a dull uniformity, whereas spiritual unity is compatible with diversity. They do not believe that the world would be impressed by the spectacle of all Christians united in one ecclesiastical body, but they are confident that it would be moved by the sight of all Christians expressing their common life in Christ by loving one another and co-operating together, in spite of differences of emphasis and organization.

The Baptist attitude to the question of reunion is often misrepresented, being interpreted by some as due simply to their "narrowness." They are charged with being more recalcitrant to any proposals for reunion than any other Christian body. Their reply is to acknowledge a certain element of truth in the accusation but to point out that it is not to their discredit. They are organized as a separate denomination to secure untrammelled

[1] For the Anglo-Catholic claim that both questions are the same, see *Essays, Catholic and Critical*, p. 153.

expression for the truth that personal faith is of primary importance in man's relation to God. They are reluctant to agree to any compromise of this truth which reunion with other Churches might imply, being convinced that there is still real need for clear witness to their primary principle.[1] In their own view the simplicities for which they stand represent the true catholicity of the New Testament. For them, the unity of the Church is something intensely spiritual, not a mechanism which can be broken. "A visible, formal, and mechanical unity," said John Clifford, "has no charm for us whatever. It is not the unity Jesus prayed for; nor is it the unity that increases spiritual efficiency, augments righteousness, or advances the kingdom of God."[2] Though they are denominationalists, Baptists are not sectarian in the reprehensible sense of that term. They unchurch none. Many of their churches admit to the Table of the Lord, and even to full membership, all professing Christians, whether they have been baptized or not. They rejoice in all forms of Christian co-operation and have given their support to the Conference of British Missionary Societies, the Free Church Federal Council, the Student Christian Movement, and the cause of interdenominational scholarship, and, with important reservations in America, to the Ecumenical Movement. They do not, however, regard the existence of separate denominations as sinful, provided they acknowledge one another as truly within the Church of Christ. It is discord they deplore, not diversity; and they love liberty more than uniformity. They also believe that a divided Church, each part of which is convinced of the truth it sees, is more likely to provide elbow-room for the different types within the human family, and is more likely to convince the world, than a Church united in uncertainty or by compromise.[3] Moreover, they have a deep dislike for any scheme of reunion which would leave out the Society of Friends and the Salvation Army. To them, it seems that the spiritual unity for which they stand is the more splendid

[1] Cf. *Report of the Sixth Baptist World Congress*, p. 120.
[2] *Report of the Second Baptist World Congress*, p. 62.
[3] Cf. C. J. Cadoux, *A Pilgrim's Further Progress*, p. 141.

for its varieties, and that the charge of narrowness is more fittingly directed against those who cannot find catholicity where episcopacy is absent. It would, however, be idle to deny that there are a few Baptists, mainly in England, who are convinced supporters of the reunion movement. Their arguments have been forcefully set out by one of them, Dr. Hugh Martin, in his *Christian Reunion: A Plea for Action* (London, 1941).

The last twenty-five years have also seen the rise within the denomination of a group which believes that Baptists should abandon their independent church polity in favour of some form of centralized connexionalism. They urge that such a change would carry to its logical conclusion the development in power and influence of the Baptist Union during the last fifty years. They hold that there is no necessary connexion between Baptist principles and the congregational or independent system of church government.[1] Some point to the connexionalism of the General Baptists and the larger groupings of the Particular Baptists as providing historical precedent for such a step, though they usually concede that in both bodies the autonomy of the local church was always respected.[2] Others maintain that the independent church polity was little more than a reflex of the economic individualism of the time in which it came to birth and that the passing of the one ought to mean the passing of the other. All the members of the group appear to have been affected by the collectivist tendencies of the present time in which planning is the primary concern of all governments. They feel that independency does not suffice for present-day needs and that something more requires to be done to counteract the tendency for each local church to become a law unto itself. Some confess that they would like to see what hitherto has never existed—a Baptist Church comparable to the Roman Catholic, Anglican, or Presbyterian Churches. Those who

[1] See, for example, Klaiber, *op. cit.*, p. 200; Payne, *The Fellowship of Believers;* and R. C. Walton's forthcoming *The Lord Hath Yet: an Essay on the Baptist Doctrine of the Church.*

[2] "No one can understand the life of the denomination who does not realize that all the larger groupings of Baptist Churches are for common action by representatives, not for the exercise of authoritative control" (H. Wheeler Robinson, *Life and Faith of the Baptists*, p. 107).

favour reunion naturally support such a proposal, as its indispensable pre-requisite. They realize the impossibility of uniting churches with denominations. Their attitude is "We have got a Baptist denomination; let us now have a Baptist Church, as well as Baptist churches." Some, like Shakespeare, do not like the divided allegiance between the Baptist Union and the Baptist Missionary Society, and would like to see all Baptist societies co-ordinated and centralized. They are not satisfied with the policy which hitherto has entrusted the prosecution of a single object to those most enthusiastic about it.[1]

The great majority of Baptists throughout the world still regard their congregational church polity as no accident but the logical outcome of their acceptance of the doctrine of the equality and priesthood of all believers. For them, no other polity sets forth the "Crown Rights of the Redeemer" in so clear and unmistakable a fashion. They feel that the independent polity is libelled when it is represented as encouraging each local church to become selfishly wrapped up in its own concerns, without a care for others. They believe that the present fraternal, voluntary groupings of the churches (ranging from the local Associations to the World Alliance) are sufficient to secure adequate strategical planning for Baptists. They look with apprehension on the idea of a centralized body governing the churches, knowing that the good effects of centralization are often counteracted by the evil effects of officialism. As a well-known political theorist has said,[2] "Any big organization is, however democratic its machinery, bound to become hierarchical. A community where all organizations are gathered into one great system cannot give its members equality, whether it is theoretically authoritarian or democratic." Those who contend for the maintenance of the present polity urge that the tendency of connexionalism is to become clerical and to lessen the place given to the layman, and that Baptists cannot

[1] See Whitley, H.B.B., pp. 270 ff. for the fruitful working of this policy in the past.

[2] A. D. Lindsay (the Master of Balliol), *The Modern Democratic State*, Vol. 1, p. 259. See pp. 77, 117 ff. for the debt which democracy owes to the Independents and Baptists.

adopt a polity which restricts the responsibilities and rights of the laity without compromising their doctrine of the spiritual competency of the common man. The call for a Baptist Church is, in their opinion, a dangerous approximation to the Church-type of Christianity, with its reliance upon authority and its dislike of freedom. "While others begin with the conception of a central organization that is thought of as including the local church, Baptists," says Dr. Arthur Dakin,[1] "start at the opposite end, and, from the local church, work up to such central organization as on that basis can be achieved. This it seems to me is fundamental to Baptist polity and cannot be departed from without abandoning the essential Baptist position." "A union of churches is not, and cannot be, a Baptist church, nor can the Union of Great Britain and Ireland be regarded as *the* Baptist Church. . . . There is in the Baptist body no central control. But central control is lacking because that particular conception of the church which creates central control is itself lacking."[2] These words correctly represent the present position, yet what Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke has called "the paradox of Baptist unity" remains. The bonds which hold Baptists together are slight but they are effective, as their achievements show. When the call is given, they become no collection of stragglers, but a disciplined army. Some churches may abuse their freedom, but the vast majority of those in fellowship with the Baptist Union know how to co-operate for worthy ends, as their generous response to its financial appeals shows. The voluntary principle pervades their life but they are not isolationists. They feel themselves to be one. "Their unity," says Dr. Rushbrooke, "like that of the British Empire, is to the outsider and onlooker a paradox and almost an absurdity. They, and they alone, have dared to trust the maintenance of their fellowship to spiritual powers, that is to say, to take the full risks of their freedom in Christ. Yet I bear witness that there is no Christian communion in all the world with a stronger sense of its inward unity."[3]

[1] *The Baptist View of the Church and Ministry*, p. 5.
[2] *ibid.*, p. 47.
[3] *Spurgeon's College Magazine* (1944), p. 14.

It is not to be regretted that this discussion of Baptist church polity has been initiated. It has brought into the clear light of day an issue that has long disturbed the minds of some, and may serve to remove the suspicion that a change in polity was being introduced by indirect means. No system of church government is perfect; and the imperfections of an independent polity always reveal themselves when the tides of religious life are running low. Many of the difficulties attributed to our polity are the results of that "despiritualization" of modern life which has cast its shadow upon churches and ministers. Preoccupation with organization may be a sign not of life but of decay, since among Baptists order follows life, and is not thought of as preceding and creating it. The problem is to secure more co-ordination of effort and more constructive planning without forsaking distinctive principles. Possibly no worthy solution will emerge until the churches have experienced the benefits of a true revival of religion, which will bring with it new thoughts as well as new life and power. In the meantime, those who are pressing for changes may be relied upon not to press their views to the point at which division among British Baptists would become inevitable, and a change would be introduced which might put them out of touch with millions of other Baptists throughout the world.

Another matter on which Baptists do not all agree concerns the question whether the baptism of a believer requires more than mere symbolism for its interpretation. The older Baptists were, in the main, contented to set forth a symbolic view of baptism which reduced it to a mere sign. For them, it symbolized the inward experience of conversion, and the experience of dying to the old sinful life and rising again to newness of life in Christ. It was also an act of obedience to a command of Christ, and the symbolic utterance of the candidate's purpose to live for Him and join His people. Largely under the influence of the writings of Dr. H. Wheeler Robinson,[1] many English Baptists have abandoned this view in favour of a sacramental interpretation of believers'

[1] See his *Baptist Principles*, pp. 13 ff. and his *Life and Faith of the Baptists*, pp. 175 ff.; and the present writer's essay in *The Ministry and the Sacraments* (ed. Dunkerley).

baptism. They reject as superstitious the *ex opere operato* doctrine of the sacraments; and resolutely refuse to make baptism necessary for salvation. Personal response to the grace of God in Christ is the only thing that can, in their view, make a man a Christian. Baptism without conversion is, therefore, nothing and no baptism. They point out, however, that in the New Testament the gift of the Spirit is associated with the baptism of believers, and that as a matter of fact the actual experience of those baptized as believers carries them beyond mere symbolism. Their baptism is an unforgettable religious experience of the first rank, in which God does something for them in response to their repentance and faith. They receive from Him a further endowment of the Spirit and further power to walk in newness of life. It makes their surrender to Christ more absolute and enhances their union with Him. It quickens their sense of responsibility to Him as Lord, deepens their sense of pardon and of sin forgiven, and brings them a profounder experience of that Divine grace they had already embraced by faith at their conversion. Clearly, then, their baptism is something more than a declaratory act on their part; it is a genuine sacrament: a means of grace in which God, in response to their faith, uses material media as the vehicle of His grace. To this sacramental experience the scriptural mode of baptism by immersion contributes something of real value. Experience shows that it has greater psychological and spiritual value than any other mode. It is more impressive for the recipient and also for the beholder. It makes a more exacting demand upon the candidate's character; and it is not fitting that the beginning of a person's Christian life should be signalized by a sacramental act which is trivial. In such an act it is important that the symbolism employed should be appropriate, otherwise the sacrament may be mutilated and deprived of some of its value for the recipient. Immersion is a much better symbol than sprinkling or affusion of the necessity of complete surrender to Christ, of death to sin, of burial with Christ, and of resurrection to a new life in Him.[1]

[1] I have here used what I have written in *Concerning Believers Baptism*, ed. F. C. Bryan, pp. 58 ff. It may be added that the baptism of a believer by immersion

The value of this fuller doctrine of believers' baptism to Baptist apologetic is obvious. When the early Baptists were charged with preserving the archaic form of the rite of baptism and of being ritualists, they replied that their loyalty to the New Testament prevented them from modifying a scriptural ordinance. To-day they advance the further claim that they alone preserve the full sacramental value of believers' baptism as a means of grace, and that baptism is deprived of its divine intention of enriching the soul of its recipient when it is administered to infants or to any who have not already made a personal surrender to Christ. Most Christians safeguard the sacramental value of the Lord's Supper by confining it to professing Christians. Baptists claim that the same principle should be applied to both sacraments, if they are to be efficacious symbols of the divine grace. They maintain that they alone make baptism an ethical act on the part of the recipient, and thus a genuine sacramental experience.

One result of this new apologetic has been to incline Baptists, in recent years, to make more, rather than less, of baptism. In some quarters there is a growing tendency to regard with less favour open-membership churches.[1] It is pointed out that if open-membership became the general rule among Baptists, "our dictionaries might then define a Baptist Church as the only one which did not make baptism a condition of admission."[2] Stress is also laid on the fact that, if the New Testament knows nothing of infant-baptism, it also knows nothing of the unbaptized church member. To this it is sometimes rejoined that if baptism is not necessary to salvation, it cannot be made a condition of church membership. But the rejoinder misses the whole point of the new apologetic which sets forth believers' baptism as a spiritual experience too precious to be neglected. The problem thus indicated is easily exaggerated. Ministers of open-member-

engraves upon the mind the cardinal doctrines of the evangelical faith and explains why Baptists, in spite of their creedless condition, remain loyal to these doctrines.

[1] See Payne, *The Fellowship of Believers*, pp. 69, 83 f.

[2] H. Wheeler Robinson, *Life and Faith of the Baptists*, p. 120.

ship churches do not find their Baptist witness fruitless, when they state their case on the highest grounds. Nevertheless it is urged by some that the proper *via media* is to be found in open-communion and closed-membership. But no suggestion is made that it is not within the competency of each church to settle the matter for itself.

Before we close, it may be well to take a glance backward on the remarkable story that has here been told of how the little group gathered by John Smyth in Amsterdam has become a world-wide communion. The expansion has been achieved without political or social support of any kind, and often in the face of persecution and repression. Baptists would never have achieved their present proportions, if they had done nothing more than contest infant-baptism and insist on immersion as the proper mode of baptism. In contesting infant-baptism, "Baptists are testifying against much more than an isolated and relatively unimportant custom; they are testifying against the whole complex of ideas of which it was a symbol, out of which grew the conception of the Church as primarily a great sacramental institution, administered by a body of officials vested with spiritual powers in which ordinary Christians could not share."[1] Throughout their history they have depended more on the truths they proclaimed than on the institutions they maintained. Their history also reveals their capacity to fuse the different strains in their heritage with a minimum of loss. It reveals how lessons were learned, changes made, and tensions resolved in a higher unity. From the Mennonite Anabaptists some inherited a proletarian radicalism, a connexional church polity, an anti-Augustinian theology, a biblical literalism, a touch of millenarianism and of that Pietism which tends to withdraw itself from the world and refuses to concern itself with the needs of society as a whole. But in England the Fifth Monarchy Movement was a flash-in-the-pan, and the Seventh Day Baptists faded out. Other extravagances were also left behind. Proletarian radicalism has counteracted the tendency to Pietism. Baptists have always insisted on the rights

[1] H. Wheeler Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

of the common man, and now apply their radicalism to the social, economic and international problems of the time. True, their faith in conversion has never been lost, save by the old General Baptists from whom they had to part. They have learned to associate evangelism with a social programme, by combining the two slogans: "None but changed men can change the world," and "If the writ of Christ is to run anywhere, it must run everywhere." Their proletarian radicalism made them content with inexperienced and often uneducated leaders, but, without prejudicing the rights of the laity, they have learned to value an educated ministry. From the Congregationalist Separatists, the largest group of Baptists derived a Calvinistic theology and an independent church polity. But when Calvinism froze their evangelistic zeal, they succeeded in carrying most of their adherents with them when they left its rigours behind; and they learned how to unite their independent churches in a variety of alliances on a free and voluntary basis. The influence of the mystical strain in Christianity affected some, producing a certain tendency to stress the Inner Light and some indifference to the sacraments as optional. Upon the General Baptists of the New Connexion the Evangelical Revival had a great influence, but the time came when they could unite with the larger body. These successful fusions and changes encourage the belief that the modern denomination will be able to adapt itself to new conditions without the sacrifice of any principle. They certainly justify the contention that "the Baptist denomination is not an accident, nor an incident, nor an experiment; it is the normal development and permanent embodiment of a great Christian principle."[1]

We repeat that Baptists rejoice in all they hold in common with their fellow-Christians of other communions, but they have their own distinctive marks and qualities. They are characterized by their love of liberty and their determination to claim "absolute religious liberty for every man of every faith, and no faith." They were the first in England to stand for complete

[1] *Report of the First World Congress*, p. 22.

liberty of conscience, and rejoice to see this principle now increasingly acknowledged as the indefeasible right of all mankind.

Their second characteristic, which arises out of their first, is their love of self-government. Their third is their zeal for evangelism both at home and abroad. That they were in the forefront of the modern missionary enterprise was no accident. The labours of C. H. Spurgeon are a sufficient evidence of their zeal for evangelistic work at home. These three characteristics derive from their emphasis on the necessity of personal faith in all Christians and members of the Church. They share with other Free Churchmen this stress on the vital truth that no man is born a Christian or a member of Christ's Church, but can become such only by his own definite choice. Baptists claim, however, that by confining baptism to believers they safeguard this truth in a thorough-going fashion. Theirs is the only baptism which preserves the personal meaning of faith and grace, and emphasizes the spiritual nature of the Church and the moral change which takes place in conversion.[1]

As they face the future, Baptists are under no illusion. They realize that civilization has for years been drifting away from religion and that Scientific Humanism, which denies the fundamentals of the Christian Gospel, is now the creed of many. Nor are they complacent. They know that they have their share of those defects which correspond to their virtues.[2] But they believe that they are doing for Christ and His Church something that needs to be done and which would not be done without them. They are convinced that they can best serve Christ and their fellow-men by being themselves. They look forward to the time when a new glory is sure to shine in the face of all Christ's people. In that glory they believe they will share. As the custodians of a great heritage, they view their future with sober confidence. They stand for a type of Christianity which is rooted in the New Testament and has been vindicated by its achievements throughout

[1] Compare the article by R. L. Child in the *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. VIII, pp. 84 ff., and H. Wheeler Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 11 ff.

[2] For a candid account of their weaknesses, see H. Wheeler Robinson, *ibid.*, Chapter VII.

the world. Conserving, as it does, the spiritual rights and responsibilities of the common man, they are confident that it will make an increasing appeal in the new age of the common man, which political and other prophets proclaim will follow the Second World War—especially, perhaps, in those lands where he has been offered only the choice between a clerical Church and no Church at all. Baptists can offer high-churchmanship without clericalism, and sacramentalism without sacerdotalism. For their simple presentation of the Gospel of Christ, they are convinced there is still a need. They do not imagine that they have reached finality, but they are ready "as the Lord's free people . . . to walk in all His ways, made known or to be made known to them."

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